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KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN JOHANNINE THOUGHT

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KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN JOHANNINE THOUGHT

BY
MARY REDINGTON ELY

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PREFACE

This book directs itself to the study of one phase only of the religious thought of the Fourth Gospel. It does not aim at a comprehensive treatment of Johannine theology, but dealing, as it does, with one of the most fundamental propositions upon which Johannine theology is built, it is offered in the hope that it may make its contribution to the understanding of the gospel as a whole.

The new study of the New Testament rests upon the assumption that we cannot fully understand the documents of the early Christian movement until we have oriented ourselves in the world from which they sprang, and this study has been engaged in with this aim in view. Its task is the reconstruction of the world of thought surrounding the author of the Fourth Gospel as it bore upon the concept which he held to be central for Christianity. Its office will have been fulfilled if it can help toward a true appreciation of what the author of the gospel meant in that significant definition of Christian experience—"This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."

My debt is great to many, but I wish to express special thanks for valuable suggestion and help in the preparation of this volume to Professor Shirley Jackson Case of the University of Chicago, to Professors James Everett Frame and Eugene William Lyman of the

Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and to my colleague, Miss Cornelia C. Coulter of Vassar College.

MARY REDINGTON ELY.

Vassar College
April 20, 1925

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I

INTRODUCTION

THE increasing understanding of the evolutionary nature of Christianity has carried with it a truer appreciation of the purpose and character of its early writings. The documents are now seen to be susceptible of interpretation only in the light of the conditions of life which lay behind them. The older view, which held the documents as ends in themselves and used theological interpretation as the method of research, has given place to a consideration of the New Testament writings as means through which to view the community life of which they were an expression. This is but another way of saying that the temper of New Testament study today is prevailingly historical rather than theological, and that the shift from a dogmatic to a sociological and ethical interest in the field of religion has compelled the adoption of the historian's method in the study of a religious movement.

But this shift of interest which makes us look at documents as means rather than as ends, has had, in its turn, an effect upon our knowledge of the writings themselves. If Christianity is to be viewed as genu-

inely evolutionary in character, reflecting the life of men, actually a part of the social order in the successive stages of the world's history, then our understanding of its expression in institutions, in practices, and in documents is increased by any advance we may make in knowledge of social, political, ethical, geographical, or economic conditions in the times which produced them.

The documents have become means through which to gain acquaintance with the thought of the day, but, at the same time, the writings themselves have become much more understandable, as the light of surrounding conditions has been thrown upon them.

In the case of no one of the New Testament writings has this relationship between the understanding of the social order and thought of the time in which it appeared, and the understanding of the book itself been more apparent than in the case of the Fourth Gospel. The Gospel seen as "literature waiting upon life" reveals a critical period in the development of the Christian community in the early decades of the second century.

Here was a process of transition, of critical readjustment in the Christian community. It was transition from the primitive era of spontaneous enthusiasm to a more settled and permanent régime, with the immediate expectation of Messianic glories removed. It was transition from the homogeneous culture of an isolated Palestine to the varied and complex civilization of the Græco-Roman world. It was transition from a world of thought which dealt with external, mechanical, and very practical ideas to a culture that was genuinely philosophical, and that gave tolerant interest to widely diverse speculative systems.[1]

[1] Scott: *The Fourth Gospel,* pp. 4-9.

This fact of the transitional nature of the book's environment once grasped, the motive for writing which such an environment would produce once appreciated, many of the older difficulties in the interpretation of the book itself become explicable. We can see a reason for the blending of varying and even contradictory modes of thought, for the introduction of Gentile ideas, for the various defensive positions of the book, and, in the main, for the general trend of thought which sets forth the meaning of the life of Jesus as eternal and spiritual, and claims that inward fellowship with him is the essence of religious experience.

Without the book, we should have lost one of our best sources for knowledge of the transitional character of the period through which Christianity was passing; but without this fundamental fact which reveals the *raison d'être* of the book itself, we should be at a loss to interpret many of the minor features of the writing.

It is to one phase of the study of the environment and motivation of the Fourth Gospel to which this study addresses itself. Its purpose is the discovery of the causes at work which produced in the mind of the writer an emphasis upon *knowledge of God* as essential to religion; what notions about the place of knowledge in religious experience he met with in his environment; how far they acted as stimuli to which his view may be seen as a response—and accordingly what meaning he gave to the term.

A view of this problem of "knowledge" in the Fourth Gospel which commands high respect and interest has been presented in Professor E. F. Scott's article "Hellenistic Mysticism in the Fourth Gospel." [2] In the course of his study of the genetic relationships

[2] *Amer. Jour. Theol.* XX, pp. 191 ff.

of the mysticism of the Fourth Gospel, which convincingly demonstrates a kinship between the Fourth Gospel and the redemption systems of the Hellenistic world, Dr. Scott says: " 'Knowledge' for the evangelist is the response on man's part to the revelation offered by God. It has nothing to do with any activity of the reason, but proceeds from that higher illumination by which we become aware of unseen realities. 'Faith' is now merged in 'knowledge,' not because the emphasis has shifted from the moral to the intellectual side, but because the message of Christ is conceived as mystery, only to be appropriated by an inspired γνῶσις." [3] Fully sympathetic with the general trend of Dr. Scott's article, and deeply appreciative of its learning and acumen, the present writer is disposed to press certain questions in relation to this phase of its thought. Is the "knowledge" for which the Fourth Gospel stands a "mystery" in the Hellenistic sense? Is the road to its achievement exclusively the way of illumination as in the mystery cults? Has the concept divested itself of its reasoning and reflective elements? Is the Johannine conception of Christianity, as Dr. Scott asserts, more truly "a religion of redemption in the Hellenistic sense" than in Paul's thought? [4]

Dr. Scott has indicated other features of the Johannine exposition of religion which differentiate it from the mystery-cult: its dismissal of crude or primitive notions of astrology, magic, angelology, and demonology; its substitution of the constant mood of communion with God for the ecstatic rapture of the mystery-religions; its more spiritual interpretation of the sacramental rites; its universalistic note, as against the esoteric notions of redemption in the mystery-cults; its

[3] *Amer. Jour. Theol.* XX, p. 345. [4] *Op. cit.*, p. 347.

ethical emphasis, and, most significantly, its grounding upon historical fact.

The conclusion of the article is that the Fourth Gospel, representing as it does the fusion of many strains of thought, is still much more than a mere mingling of Oriental, Greek, and Jewish elements; that its mysticism is of a new and unique type whose source we have yet to discover. "All that he borrows from contemporary religion is pressed into the service of a new mysticism which rests on a deeper apprehension of the meaning of the life of Christ." [5]

The soundness of this conclusion is indisputable. The book stands quite alone not only in Christian history, but in the history of all religious literature; it is the work of an original and creative mind, and that recognition must not be lost sight of in any genetic study of its views. But the keener our penetration into the knowledge of both its affiliations with, and its divergences from the trends of thought from which it sprang, the finer our appreciation of its creative genius, and the surer our understanding of the message which it aims to give.

The question, then, which we would consider is that of the meaning of the term "knowledge of God" in the mysticism of the Fourth Gospel. Is it, as Dr. Scott has affirmed, equivalent to the "mystery" of the Hellenistic religion of redemption? Or is it possible that in the use of the concept also, as well as in the directions listed by Dr. Scott, there has been departure from its generally accepted use in the Hellenistic redemption-religions?

To see our way into the study, it may be well to take account, as briefly and swiftly as possible, of the function of knowledge in religion in somewhat general

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 359.

terms, and—since our Gospel classifies unquestionably in the field of mystical expression—of knowledge as a part of mystical religion. Primitive religion does not concern itself with reflective or rational processes. Helplessness in the face of external forces over which he has no control, bewilderment in the presence of dreams, death, and other phenomena of human life which are beyond his power to regulate, lead primitive man to seek ways to propitiate or to coerce the mysterious supernatural powers which instinctively he feels must lie behind these events. Shamanism could make use of ecstatic phenomena with ease, for the very reason that reflective thinking played so negligible a part in primitive religion.

Modern sociological investigation in the field of religion has let us see how late a development reflective thinking is in the history of religion. Rites, we are told, precede reflection upon the meaning of rites, and any rational processes, such as creed-building or speculation upon the intellectual values of religion, are of late development.

Religion does in time, however, present itself as something to be known as well as felt. In a priestly system, like the Vedic, the priest-class is composed of those who *know*—know what are the proper sacrifices for given situations, know how the gods are to be pleased. The tradition of that possession of knowledge must be maintained by the priest-class, since it is the source of their livelihood; and sacerdotalism progresses fostered by itself in the interests of self-protection for the governing class.

In distinction from cultic systems of religion, ethical or legal systems find use for knowledge in the necessity for correct observance of an ethical code. Interpreters of the ethic, like the scribe of the Hebrew faith, take

the place of the priest-class in the priestly system. Confucianism, at the extreme of the ethical type, asks that its followers *know* and apply the system of ethics for which it stands.

Knowledge, in the external sense, also has a place in the creed-making tendencies of religions of all types as they develop along with the civilizations of which they are a part. Here, the theologian becomes the expert who brings the doctrine to its complete and well-rounded expression. The far reaches of intellectual development in religion reveal themselves in the philosophy and psychology of religion where its ultimate realities are weighed, or its processes subjected to the scrutiny of scientific examination.

Knowledge, however, as an integral factor in personal religious experience itself—not imparted by a sacerdotal class who have cultic practices in their charge; not mediated through official interpreters who are the guardians of the group ethics; nor yet formulated by the theologians who are the systematizers of doctrine; nor subjected to scientific analysis by experts in the philosophical or psychological field, but knowledge which is in and of itself a part of personal religious experience finds its way into man's life through the channels of mystical religion.

Even in philosophical systems which border closely on religion, the rational element often passes over into mysticism, as for example, with Plato, in whose system the contemplation of reality brought a kind of ecstasy which differed from religious ecstasy more in the steps by which man arrived at it, than it did in kind or in effect.

Mysticism is a term so loosely used as almost to defy definition, but for the purposes of this study, we may take it in its stricter sense as a "type of religion

which puts emphasis on immediate experience of God, a direct and intimate consciousness of divine reality." [6] Here is the emergence of the individual from the group, as an entity, capable of individual experience in the field of religion apart from the social needs.

In the extreme forms of mystical experience, complete absorption, or loss of personality takes place, and, along with all muscular control, mental functions cease, and the knowledge derived from the experience is known as "immediate" or intuitive knowledge. But as Coe has demonstrated by his chart of the genealogy of mysticism, there is genuine psychological continuity from the most primitive automatisms of Shamanism to mystical experiences which involve complete loss of personality, as in the extreme forms of rapture known as ecstasy.[7]

Between the two extremes, lie the more usual ranges of mystical experience with partial abeyance of mental functions, and with a revelation which *seems* to the participant to be self-evident.

In ordinary usage, we employ the terms "emotional mysticism" or "intellectual mysticism" to denote respectively those forms of mystical experience in which emotion has the predominance over the intellectual, or those forms in which the proportion is reversed. And in general, the test must lie in the field of process rather than of content, since the revelation *seems,* in any case, to the participant to be new knowledge, quite independent of any rational processes of his own.

The question really lies here: are the steps taken to induce the mystical state, those which lie in the field of reflection or those which have subordinated rational

[6] As defined by Rufus Jones in his article "Mysticism," in *A Dictionary of Religion and Ethics,* p. 302.

[7] Coe, *The Psychology of Religion,* pp. 263 ff.

processes and made direct appeal to the emotions? For the problem which lies directly before us, we are inquiring whether the author of the Fourth Gospel desired to teach a genuinely mystical form of religion as did the exponents of the Hellenistic mysteries. How far did the Johannine writer desire a suppression of rational faculties in man's experience of God? How far did he make direct appeal for them? Did "knowledge" stand for ecstatic illumination to him, or did he believe that it was the result of man's reflection?

It is not to be supposed that any such analysis in psychological terms is thought to have existed at the time of the writing of the Gospel. The facts and the processes existed but they were not classified or named. The greatest caution must be exercised against attributing modern psychological analysis to an age as innocent of such processes as it was of modern methods of aerial navigation. Nothing could be farther from the thought of the writer than the expectation of any self-conscious analysis of religious experience into emotional or intellectual elements, any appeal by the author of the Fourth Gospel to his readers that presupposed a sophisticated value-judgment upon this or that kind of mystical experience. It would be folly in the extreme to look for any such result from this study.

What does, however, seem to the writer possible, and for purposes of a genuine understanding of the Gospel, profitable, is to examine the total concept of man's experience of God as the Fourth Gospel portrays it, and with the help of such analysis as we have at our command today to bring before us as clear a notion as we can of what the writer actually meant when he defined the life eternal, which to him was the essence of religion, as "that they should

know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou didst send."

As is quite self-evident, there is no direct method open for such a study. The author of the Gospel did not subject his own religious faith to analysis, even of a simple sort. He has made no comparisons between his own belief and those contemporary religious systems which he knew. He has rather projected into a literary form, which is more poetic and dramatic than it is analytical or catalogic, a deep, personal religious experience, which he believed would be of value to mankind.

At the center of that experience there lay a concept which he called "knowledge of God." Such a concept is capable of more than one interpretation. It may have meant to him a highly emotionalized experience in which "knowledge" was equivalent to feeling, divorced from rational processes. It may have signified to him an experience in which reflective or rational processes figured with sufficient strength to make him recognize them as essential.

Two gateways lie open before us for the study which may help to bring us understanding of the concept. One avenue will be through the treatment of the concept in the Gospel itself, the proportional emphasis which the writer places upon it, the context of ideas into which it is set, and the language which he uses in referring to it. Both the process and the content of the knowledge which he holds to be of primary significance for religion, may thus be viewed, even though the author has offered no formal description or analysis of it.

The second avenue to an understanding of the concept is through the treatment of it in other religious systems with which the writer came into contact. And

here we may hope for light upon the motives which impelled the author to express himself as he did. His work came into being as a response to an environment in which religious values took a high place. This very concept "knowledge" was one of primary significance in the religious experience of the day.

Indeed, the word *gnosis,* we may well believe, held in the popular vocabulary of religion in that day much the same place that such terms as "social," "democratic," and "evolution" hold in our religious vocabulary today. He was dealing with a concept that was characteristic of his day, and his use of it meant a response either favorable or unfavorable to the prevailing notions which he met in his world. A comparison between his use of it and that of contemporary religious thought should help us to see the motive behind his employment of it.

It might at first sight appear sufficient to compare the Fourth Gospel view of "knowledge" with that of the mystery-religions, since that is the comparison which Dr. Scott's article most directly suggests, but it must be remembered that neither the Fourth Gospel nor the mystery religions stand apart from the great syncretistic process which was characteristic of their age. To see any one of the concepts which formed a part of a given author's structure of ideas in that day with any real appreciation of its place in his world, compels an inductive study of the concept as it appeared in the various religious systems which he touched either directly or indirectly.

A mere glimpse into the complex religious situation of the city of Ephesus [8] at the close of the first century of the Christian era is all that is needed to

[8] Proceeding upon the usually accepted view of the provenance of the Gospel.

give a realization that incentives to religious expression would spring from such a milieu. Interchange of ideas had meant, on the one hand, adaptation of one system by another, where yielding was possible, and on the other hand, defense of some positions too dear to relinquish when conflict appeared.

For Christianity particularly this syncretizing process had brought rapid development. With the shift from Palestine to Asia Minor, had come to the Christian movement not merely the liberality of spirit that would allow the participation of Gentiles in the Christian brotherhood, but the compulsion to an actual rephrasing of the categories of Christian thought, to make them comprehensible to the Græco-Roman world. No religion could commend itself on new ground if it spoke in a language unintelligible to the culture of that soil.

Part of the adapting process had already been done by Paul, but it was not complete. In Ephesus, in particular, Christianity found itself at a pivotal point in the whirlpool of religious and philosophical thought of the first century A.D. The ancient seat of Greek Artemis-worship, Ephesus had, through her commercial importance, also come to be the meeting-place of Oriental and Western systems of thought. The old philosophical school of Heraclitus was now exerting only a traditional influence, but a new philosophy was alive in democratic dress. Stoics, Cynics, and Epicureans were the popular preachers of a philosophy that came closer to religion than any ancient philosophy had done.[9] Judaism had her synagogues in Ephesus,[10] and the city was rife with the revival of the redemp-

[9] Gardner, *The Ephesian Gospel,* Ch. i.
[10] Acts xix. 8.

tion-religions—the popular faiths offering individual salvation to a world intensely eager for just such religious satisfactions.

The urge to a new presentation of Christianity in such a situation can well be understood. The era of high enthusiasm had passed; the expectation of the immediate return of Jesus, long-deferred, had resolved itself into an acceptance of the work of a risen and exalted Christ. The teaching and ministry of Paul had made the partial adjustment to Hellenistic ways of expression, and had given the stamp of a redemption religion to Christianity; but now, after a half-century, the closer touch of the Christian movement with the syncretistic tendencies in religious thought in Asia Minor had compelled a new presentation.

There could be no understanding of the Fourth Gospel without recognition of the fact that in some directions the author found himself accepting as his own, ideas that were current in other forms of religious thought, and that in others he found himself at variance with them, and took a stand against them. A special emphasis here, a greater impressiveness of utterance there, will become explicable when seen in relation to this situation.

The give and take of such a world of thought is a determining factor for the religious expression of any exponent of a faith whom it touches, and the approach to understanding of any such concept as we have taken for study must be by way of the contemporary thought. Does it indicate a favorable or an unfavorable reaction to its environment?

It will readily be observed that this second method of approach is by no means a search for evidence of literary dependence between the Fourth Gospel and

documents representing contemporary cults.[11] It is rather the attempt to look through the documents to the thought of which they are the expression, to see if there is revealed community of thought with the Fourth Gospel, or if that seems not to be the case, to see whether there is revealed a motive for the Fourth Gospel expression as corrective or restraining of the contemporary view. It is a search for attitudes, not for phrases, and its purpose is to discover such clues as we can to the meaning and purposes of the expression in the Gospel.

Again, we must remind ourselves that no analysis of either the process or the content of religious experience will appear in such terms as we are accustomed to use today. We must be content to observe and make our own analysis. But some indications should result of how man thought about "knowledge" as a factor in religious experience in that day, and how the Fourth Gospel took its stand in relation to that thought.

The study will, then, proceed along the following lines: (1) A study of the use of the concept "knowledge" as fundamental to religious experience in the Fourth Gospel itself; (2) an investigation of other

[11] That similarities in diction are not sufficient always to prove the dependence of one system upon another is demonstrated by the formula:

ἐν αὐτῷ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν, Acts 17:28.

πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, John 1:3.

ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τα ταύτα, Rom. 11:36.

sometimes offered as evidence of the dependence of Christianity on Hermetism (Poim. 15:19). Norden (*Agnostos Theos,* p. 23) has shown that this formula was the common possession of the mystery-religions with the Stoics, going back to the time of Heraclitus. (Cf. Kroll: *Die Lehren des Hermes Trismegistos,* p. 49.)

systems of religion available to this writer to see how the concept figured there; (3) a return to the Fourth Gospel to view the concept in relation to the other systems examined and to see what light is thrown upon the Gospel by the sphere of thought thus revealed.

A word should be said about the relation of the study to the philosophies which were current in the Mediterranean world at the time of the writing of the Gospel. Since our study is specifically one of religious experience, no special section has been devoted to the study of the philosophies which the Fourth Gospel touched; but in the individual emphasis for which philosophy stood in that day, we should find a closely related area of thinking to the emphasis of mystical religion. As has already been pointed out, the affinities between such a philosophical ecstasy as Plato advocated and the ends of mystical religion are close.

The philosophies which were current in the Mediterranean world in the first century A.D. were at work upon many of the same problems as those which were engaging the religious systems of the day. Stoicism was for many, more a religion than a philosophy. The diatribe form, characteristic of both the Cynic and the Stoic schools, was a preaching form with a popular practical morality rather than a speculative process as its end.

Already the beginnings of epistemological theory were emerging and were giving their contribution to theories of knowledge in religion as well.[12] No study

[12] How close the correlation is between philosophy and religion at this time may be observed in Bousset's review of Norden's *Agnostos Theos* (*Theologie Literaturzeitung*, 1913, Vol. 38, pp. 195-6) in his discussion of the use of

of Christianity in the first and second centuries is complete without a recognition of the debt it owes to current philosophical systems. For the Fourth Gospel that indebtedness is especially deep.

Through whatever gateway the Fourth Gospel received directly its Logos-concept, it owes it ultimately to Greek philosophy, Heraclitus, Plato and the Stoics. Whatever adaptation it may have undergone at the hands of Philo or of Hermetic speculation, its roots were in Greek speculation. The dualistic theory appearing in the Fourth Gospel as "the children of light" and "the children of darkness" was its heritage from Hellenistic religion but it, in turn, derived it from Hellenic philosophy.

And so we might go on, indicating the debts which the Fourth Gospel owes to philosophy, but since our study is one of "knowledge" as a religious concept, no detailed examination of its place in philosophical systems will be entered upon. But it will be assumed as axiomatic that the syncretistic tendency of the Hellenistic age was not confined to the sphere of religion, but that it brought religion and philosophy into close correlation with each other and that all the religious systems under discussion were, to a more or less degree, products of that great fusing process.[13]

For purposes of this investigation, it will not be necessary to traverse the ground of critical investigation upon the authorship and date of the Gospel. Bacon's

γινώσκειν τὸν Θεὸν by Posidonius and its mystical significance. And the very existence of such a system as Gnosticism is testimony to the overlapping of the two fields.

[13] For a discussion of the relationship between philosophy and religion in the Hellenistic age, see Case, *The Evolution of Early Christianity,* Ch. viii; and for the indebtedness of the Fourth Gospel to Stoicism, see Scott, *The Fourth Gospel,* pp. 147 ff.

"The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate" [14] brings fairly and fully before us the debate upon the question, and is adequate testimony to the fact that any satisfactory discussion of the evidence is a considerable volume in itself.[15] Conclusions differ because most scholars are ready to grant that the evidence is not decisive. The differences are those of opinion starting from the same body of facts. The patristic evidence can carry us no further with finality than to substantiate the fact that the Gospel was in existence early in the second century, and upon this point there is no debate. The decision as to the date and authorship of the Gospel must rest ultimately upon internal evidence, and from that evidence such scholars as Sanday,[16] Stanton,[17] Strachan,[18] Ezra Abbott,[19] Westcott,[20] and Drummond [21] have deduced the traditional view of apostolic authorship. That position is stated by Drummond as follows:

"We have now gone carefully through the arguments against the reputed authorship of the Gospel, and on

[14] Bacon, *The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate,* New York, 1910.

[15] A recent and most admirable treatment of the authorship and dating of the Fourth Gospel is H. Latimer Jackson's, *The Problem of the Fourth Gospel,* Cambridge, 1918.

[16] Sanday, *The Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel,* Macmillan, 1872.

[17] Stanton, *The Gospels as Historical Documents,* Cambridge, 1909.

[18] Strachan, Art. "Gospel of John," in the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels.*

[19] Ezra Abbott, *The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel,* Boston, 1880.

[20] Westcott, *The Gospel according to St. John,* London, 1908.

[21] Drummond, *The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel,* Scribners, 1904.

the whole we have found them wanting. Several appear to be quite destitute of weight; others present some difficulty; one or two occasion real perplexity. But difficulties are not proofs, and we have always to consider whether greater difficulty is not involved in rejecting a proposition than in accepting it. This seems to me to be the case in the present instance. . . . On weighing the arguments for and against to the best of my power, I must give my own judgment in favor of the Johannine authorship."[22]

Prof. E. F. Scott, on the other hand, is representative of a group who, working from the same evidence, arrive at the conclusion that the author of the Gospel was not the John who was the son of Zebedee and the disciple of Jesus. The position taken by this group is fairly stated by Dr. Scott in his "The Historical and Religious Value of the Fourth Gospel":

"The Fourth Gospel, therefore, cannot be attributed to the Apostle John, and the real secret of its authorship seems to be irrevocably lost. Many attempts have been made in recent times to connect it with some particular name; but with our scanty knowledge of the early history of the Church, they are hazardous at the best. The evangelist himself remains unknown. All that we can do is to distinguish, within certain limits, the time and place in which he composed his work. From various indications, both internal and external, we can infer that he belonged to Asia Minor and probably to the region of Ephesus. His date has been much disputed; but the evidence would seem to point, more and more decisively, to some time within the first two decades of the second century."[23]

[22] Drummond, *op. cit.*, p. 514.

[23] Scott, *The Historical and Religious Value of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 12.

Without argument, this discussion will accept the critical position thus stated, and will proceed upon its assumptions, no closer definition of authorship or date being necessary for the purposes of the study undertaken.[24]

[24] It should be noted as evidence of the convergence of opinion upon non-apostolic authorship of the Gospel, that both Sanday and Strachan have indicated a change of view subsequent to the writing of the works cited.

Strachan, *The Fourth Gospel, Its Significance and Environment,* p. 9.

Sanday, *Divine Overruling,* T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1920, p. 61.

Mention should also be made of the recent investigations of Canon C. F. Burney of Rochester, England, and Professor Charles C. Torrey of Yale University, both of whom see in the Gospel evidence of Aramaic origin. (Burney: *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel,* Oxford University Press; Torrey: "The Aramaic Origin of the Gospel of John," *Harvard Theological Review,* Vol. xvi, p. 305.

II

ITS JOHANNINE USE[1]

WE have given ourselves the task of discovering the part that "knowledge of God" plays in the Fourth Gospel. The genuinely mystical character of the religion which the Gospel teaches is unmistakable. The book has been, indeed, the fountain-head of mystical Christianity, and in all the centuries of Christian literary expression it has stood unsurpassed in that field. Our question is centered about the mysticism of the Gospel, to see whether it is primarily an intellectual or an emotional mysticism. We want to see what the author meant by "knowledge"; whether it figured in his mysticism as a genuinely intellectual concept, or was loosely used to denote the goal of a mystical experience which was actually emotional in character.

Partly we hope to throw light upon the problem by seeing how the concept figured in the religious life which surrounded the Gospel in other systems than the Christian one, but our first task is the study of the Fourth Gospel itself, to see how "knowledge of God" figured in its own thought.

Preliminary to our examination of that concept in the Gospel, it may be well to pass in review quite

[1] Acknowledgment should be made of the writer's indebtedness in this study to the unpublished lectures of Professor James Everett Frame, given in his course on The Gospel of John, in Union Theological Seminary, New York City.

rapidly the leading religious positions which the Gospel affirms. Standing as a fourth biography of Jesus in the collection of New Testament writings, it differentiates itself from the other three by its interpretive aim. The historical life of Jesus is treated for the sake of making clear its eternal, spiritual meaning in the life of the world.

Jesus appears as the eternal Logos, the incarnation of God, the revealer of Life and Light to men. By him, man has access to that eternal life, which is not merely protracted existence in future time, but a quality of living here and now. Salvation, in the mind of the writer, is not a future, external transaction, contingent upon resurrection in the age to come, but an immediate, present reality, spiritual in its nature, a sharing of the divine life, meditated by the Son.

Thus the essence of religion is an individual experience, mystical union with God, a union which is secured by "abiding in Christ," which in its turn is dependent on belief—belief that Jesus was what he claimed to be, the eternal Son of God. The grounds upon which the author shows that Jesus was worthy of such belief are certain trustworthy witnesses, of which we shall have more to say later. The initiation into mystical union with God through Christ is a new-birth experience which is characterized as being "born of the Spirit." The work of the Spirit is to continue that of Jesus and the coming of the Spirit is made coincident with the end of Jesus's earthly life.

Such a view of the life of Jesus centers thought upon its abiding value in the life of man and shifts the center of interest from his death and second coming to the larger concept of his continuous office as the mediator of life to men. His death was but the gateway through which he entered into a more inclu-

sive, more completely pervasive relationship with mankind. The cardinal aim of the writer thus reveals itself as the establishing of the universal and spiritual aspects of the mission of Jesus as revealer of God and mediator of Life to men.

In pursuance of this aim, the author has confessedly made his own selection from the things that might have been related about Jesus. It is a deliberately selective process, with the aim of commending the author's own personal religious experience to others. "Many other signs, therefore, did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." [2]

In this general scheme of thought, there is evident an insistent emphasis upon "knowledge" and "belief" as essential factors in the religious experience which he advocates. The explicit purpose of the Gospel brings forward this challenge to belief: "These things are written that ye may *believe*."

The only epigrammatic definition of religion which the author essays is in terms of knowledge: "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." [3] Truth is given a central position as the great liberator of mankind. "Ye shall know the truth and truth shall make you free." [4]

The course of the narrative through Chapter xii. —the section which deals with Jesus's contacts with the world at large, in distinction from the intimate fellowship with the inner group—is a chronicle of successive occasions upon which individuals, or groups of individuals, "believe" or fail to "believe" that he

[2] xx. 31. [3] xvii. 3. [4] viii. 32.

was what he claimed to be. John the Baptist, Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, "many of the rulers," the Galileans, certain Greeks, and even "many of the Jews" are successively reported as "believing," while on the other hand is arrayed the relentless disbelief of "the Jews" as a whole.

But we must examine more closely the evangelist's handling of the concept "knowledge," and we need some acquaintance with the characteristic vocabulary of the author as it bears upon the concept and upon those that are closely related to it.

Certain striking omissions should first be noted. In spite of the evangelist's emphasis on belief as a condition of salvation, and his definition of religion as fundamentally a knowing process, he does not employ either of the two nouns which Paul uses in this context, and which we should so naturally expect, γνῶσις and πίστις. Also absent are γνώμη, judgment in the sense of a decision or opinion, φρόνημα, mind—the mind of the flesh and the mind of the spirit of Romans viii, σοφία, wisdom, and φρόνιμος, wise, the adjective so loved by Matthew.

Abbott[5] explains the absence of the noun "faith" and the compensating abundant use of the verb "believe" on the ground that the great access of wonder-working faith in the Christian community demanded explanation of the grounds for holding it, rather than further affirmation that it existed. The appropriate vocabulary for the answers to the questions arising, such as "Why do you believe?" "What or whom do you believe?" was the one chosen by the evangelist. The substitution of the verb for the Synoptic and Pauline noun gave a chance for the expression of the object and hence gave a phrase with fuller content

[5] Abbott, *Johannine Vocabulary*, London, 1905, p. 22.

than the noun alone could give. The absence of the noun γνῶσις, we shall presently see, may have been a purposeful avoidance of a term whose ordinary connotations were unsatisfactory to the writer.

The characteristic expressions used by the Fourth Gospel which have to do with the knowledge aspect of religious experience are the following:

In the prologue, ὁ λόγος:
The noun ἀλήθεια, truth; and its two cognate adjectives ἀληθής and ἀληθινός:
The verb πιστεύω, to believe, with its nearly synonymous parallel, λαμβάνω, to receive:
The verb μαρτυρέω, to witness:
The noun μαρτυρία, witness:
The two verbs οἶδα and γινώσκω, to know.

The relationship of the Logos concept to our problem will be discussed in a later section of this study. Here, as we are examining the author's vocabulary, we need only note that the term "Logos" with philosophical connotations occurs only in the prologue in which the author has given himself the task of creating a favorable attitude of mind on the part of his readers for the understanding of the message which he is about to unfold. In compact, oracular utterances, he has here summarized the fundamental positions which the Gospel is to elaborate.

The historic Logos concept has a dramatic function to perform. It is introduced without explanation, as current coin in the thought of the day, and does not occur again in the Gospel, although the ideas for which it stands are repeatedly used, closely assimilated into the thought of the Gospel. Its place in the whole fabric of the author's trend of thought will be considered later. Here we need only pause to note

the significance of the fact that the author chose as his dramatic key-word which should commend his Gospel to its world, the one which had stood in the history of philosophy for the rational principle in the cosmic process.

The repeated use of the noun ἀλήθεια and its cognate adjectives ἀληθινός and ἀληθής is significant for our study. The prologue sounds the note which the Gospel is to take up:

> The Word . . . full of grace and truth.[6]
> Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.[7]

In the fifteen cases which follow in the Gospel proper of the use of the noun "truth," three refer to the Comforter who is the Spirit of Truth and whose office is to lead the believer into Truth; six have reference to the believer as doing or knowing the Truth. To worship rightly, one must worship in spirit and in truth. The truth is to make one free. Six refer to truth as it is related to Jesus himself. He *is* Truth; he speaks the truth; it was the purpose of his coming into the world, to bear witness of the truth.

At first sight, one is inclined to interpret the "grace and truth" of the prologue as the traditional חֶסֶד־וֶאֱמֶת (mercy and truth) of the Old Testament,[8] but closer examination reveals that it is no mere reflection of that usage. The Septuagint rarely translates חֶסֶד־וֶאֱמֶת with χάρις καὶ ἀλήθεια but repeatedly with ἔλεος καὶ ἀλήθεια. This is an independent correlation of ideas, not a mere inheritance. Here "grace and truth" are in sharp contrast to the law as given by Moses. They indicate phases of the divine nature, divine gifts medi-

[6] i. 14. [7] i. 17.
[8] Pss. lxxxix. 14; lxxxv. 10; II Sam. xv. 20.

ated to men as result of the incarnation of the Logos, and are manifestations of the new spiritual birth through him.

It is significant that χάρις, which is a favorite Pauline word, is not used in our Gospel except in these instances in the prologue, while ἀλήθεια appears repeatedly. "Truth" as an integral and inherent factor in the divine life becomes, in the usage of the Gospel, that which is reality; in short, is concerned not with the ethical but with the philosophical aspects of religion.

Truth came through the incarnation of the Logos; believers are to know the truth and by the truth they are to be set free; they are to worship God in truth; Jesus has told them the truth; and at his death, the Spirit of Truth is to guide them into all truth.

The adjectives ἀληθινός and ἀληθής are used with kindred notions back of them. Jesus is the true vine. He gives the true bread to his disciples. His witness is true. With the exception of vii. 18 where "being true" is made parallel with righteousness—

> "But he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him"—

there is no ethical content in the term, but rather a philosophical one, as was the case with the noun.

There is no hortatory note in their use, no urging to truth-telling or to honest dealing, no counsel to be true. The terms are expository rather than admonitory, showing the interest of the author in commending his message as philosophically sound. It is the genuineness of the revelation of the divine Life given by Jesus that he is at pains to demonstrate. "He that sent me is true." [9]

[9] vii. 28.

Closely related to these words which indicate the soundness of the author's message, are the noun μαρτυρία and the verb μαρτυρέω. Of the thirteen instances in the Gospel of the adjective ἀληθής, seven are used to modify the noun μαρτυρία. John the Baptist bears witness to Jesus, and Jesus affirms that the witness which John has given is trustworthy. The scriptures, his own words, his works, the Spirit of Truth, and God himself all bear testimony to the fact that Jesus is what he claims to be, the Son of God and the mediator of the divine life.[10]

Thus far, the examination of the vocabulary would lead us to the opinion that the atmosphere of the religious life which the Gospel portrays is one in which genuineness and trustworthiness are values to be prized. Its primary value is reality. In the field of religious experience it matters to the author whether the individual can give a rational assent to the propositions upon which religious experience is founded.

But the author's use of the verb "to believe" is perhaps more revealing of this temper of his thought than any other one word. The word appears as a motif, the pattern, for which all the warp and woof of his writing is designed as background. There are only two chapters in the Gospel proper, in which this verb does not appear—nearly one hundred instances in all—and the figure is considerably increased by the recognition that in several cases the verb λαμβάνω serves as a synonym.

"I am come in my Father's name and ye receive me not."[11]

[10] Cf. Inge, Art. "Gospel of John," in the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels,* I pp. 692-3.

[11] v. 43.

The prevailing construction with the verb πιστεύω is the preposition εἰς with the personal accusative following.

"But of the multitude, many believed on him." [12]
"Believe in God: believe also in me." [13]

But the verb is also used without object:

"Jesus said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe;" [14]

or with a clause as object introduced by ὅτι:

"And they believed that Thou didst send me." [15]
"Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" [16]

The steady recurrence of this verb, the insistent reiteration of the idea that the essence of religion is the acceptance of the belief that Jesus actually was what he claimed to be, and conversely that failure to believe constitutes the rejection of Life,[17] the setting of the whole Gospel into a framework which shows Jesus either calling out belief from his contemporaries, or failing to win them because perversely they will not believe, is significant of the author's desire that his narrative shall commend a rational appreciation of the life and work of Jesus.

But we must not seem to fall into the error of assuming that Life, or the essence of religion, for the Johannine author is merely intellectual assent to a proposition. Belief and Love are two inseparable principles and their parallel relationship is steadily affirmed,

[12] vii. 31. [13] xiv. 1. [14] iv. 48. [15] xvii. 8. [16] xiv. 10. [17] xvi. 9.

but with heightened emphasis in the discourses to the disciples, after Chapter xii.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." [18]

"These things I command you that ye may love one another." [19]

Ethical attitudes and conduct are integrally related to the acceptance of the new Life mediated through Jesus.

"But he that doeth the truth cometh to the Light that his works may be made manifest that they have been wrought in God." [20]

That which is pressing for recognition, however, throughout the Gospel is the fact that belief in Jesus as the Son of God is the fundamental and initial condition upon which man receives the new birth into eternal life. Other factors are there, but this is basal, belief that Jesus was the Son of God and the mediator of Life.

Thus far the study of the vocabulary of the Gospel has but given us the milieu for that which is pivotal in our study. This examination has let us see that characteristically the author thinks in terms which seem to indicate an appeal for intellectual values in religious experience. But our concern is specifically with the words with which he handles his concept of "knowledge." And to that study we must turn.

The verbs of knowing in the Fourth Gospel are οἶδα, to know, γινώσκω, to come to know, and γνωρίζω, to make known. The larger number of instances of the verb γινώσκω deal with the fundamental position to which the Gospel has committed

[18] xiii. 35. [19] xv. 17. [20] iii. 21.

itself, the recognition of the claims of Jesus. Only a few examples need be given. They merely substantiate the point which emerged in our consideration of the verb "to believe":

"We have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." [21]

"If I do them (the works of my Father), though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me and I in the Father." [22]

The verb γινώσκω is also used with reference to the words and works of Jesus, "knowing" in the sense of understanding the content of his teaching. Typical of such use are the following passages:

"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." [23]

"Why do ye not understand (know) my speech?" [24]

"What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt understand hereafter." [25]

The use of οἶδα does not demand special comment except to note that only three times does it occur to denote the recognition of the claims of Jesus; in connection with Nicodemus,[26] the Samaritan woman,[27] and Martha.[28] Most frequently it is applied to Jesus's complete knowledge of situations and people, indicating his complete control over both, and his self-determination.

But we are particularly concerned with the concept of knowing as applied to God. This is the Johannine definition of religion, that man should know God and Jesus whom God sent. This assumption of knowledge of God as fundamental in religion appears also in the

[21] vi. 69. [22] x. 38. [23] viii. 32. [24] viii. 43 [25] xiii. 7. [26] iii. 2. [27] iv. 22. [28] xi. 22.

discourse about the children of Abraham. The children of Abraham say that He is their God:

"Ye have not known him, but I know him . . . and I keep his word." [29]

Jesus affirms his own knowledge of God:

"Even as the Father knoweth me and I know him." [30]

He also asserts that to know him is to know God:

"If ye had known me ye would have known the Father also: from henceforth ye know him and have seen him." [31]

Rejection of Christianity is put in terms of not knowing God:

"These things will they do (persecution of the disciples) because they have not known the Father nor me." [32]

In Chapter viii. 55 the evangelist has used both verbs οἶδα and γινώσκω to point out the difference between the believer's knowledge of God and that of Jesus which is full and complete.

What emerges from the examination of the handling of the concept in the Gospel thus far is a conviction that both "belief" and "knowledge" are given a heavy emphasis in the formulation of religion in the Fourth Gospel, so heavy that we must consider them basal in the author's thinking. Salvation, the new birth, is conditioned upon belief that Jesus was the Son of God, and eternal life is a quality of living which is characterized by knowledge of God as mediated to man through Jesus. Jesus knew God perfectly, and he who knows Jesus knows God also. That knowledge is indissolubly bound up with rightness of

[29] viii. 55. [30] x. 15. [31] xiv. 7. [32] xvi. 3.

living, and love in the beloved community is but the other side of the same shield.

What the actual content of the term "knowledge" is in the writer's mind does not yet appear. He has given no passage descriptive of his theory of knowledge, and indeed the merest beginnings of epistemological theory were all that that age knew. Our author could not dream of any analysis which should demarcate the avenues by which the mind apprehends truth. Our only means for understanding what the concept stood for in his mind, as a rational or emotional experience, is to see the concept in its larger context.

But perhaps we shall not go too far if we say that the study of the vocabulary in the Fourth Gospel would put the presuppositions on the side of a rational or reflective content in the term "knowledge." Compared with the emotional content, for example, of the term "faith" in the Pauline writings, we find here a more reflective element which calls for recognition. At least, the author has put the concept in a general setting which asks for rational appreciation of the claims of Jesus and tends to emphasize the philosophical soundness of the Gospel as a whole.

There could be no genuine appreciation of the Fourth Gospel mysticism, however, without a recognition that the religious experience which the writer is eager to share is a totality of life. It is not a set of doctrines, to which he asks assent; it is not exclusively an emotional experience which he wishes his readers to reproduce through the channels of intuitive life. It is not a set of activities performed which he wishes his readers to imitate.

It is rather a great personal religious experience, involving his own whole nature, which he seeks to

make possible for others. The rational acceptance of the historical life of Jesus as symbol, and more than symbol of the divine in human life, has opened the door to divine life in his own experience. That divine life he feels as the branch feels the life of the vine. It is the nourishment of spiritual existence as bread and water are the sustenance of the body.

It floods living with light. It makes life abundant and eternal. It finds its fruit in right conduct and in love to man. It is the totality of living in its emotional, intellectual, and conative aspects, lifted to its highest level. Not even the social aspects of living are omitted in the mysticism of this writer. The controlling idea, to be sure, is of the importance of individual religious experience. Eternal life is the individual's mystical union with God through Christ. But the close juxtaposition of the Love and Belief concepts, the commands of Jesus, urging love of the brethren,[33] keep the social ideal in view.

Most significant is the scene in which Jesus washes the disciples' feet,[34] as a symbolic act, teaching that loving service is the basis of their fellowship. The farewell discourses urge a basis of love within the beloved community, as the central bond of their union.

But that this social ideal is not the primary one in the author's mind is evidenced by the fact that it is presented not as an end in itself but as a means toward the achievement of the individual's union with Christ. The word "kingdom" appears only twice in the Gospel,[35] and then almost completely divested of its Synoptic content. In both cases it is more a circumlocution for the idea of the saving work of the person of Christ than it is a designation for a social

[33] xv. 12-13; xiii. 34; xv. 17.
[34] xiii. 5-11.
[35] iii. 3-5; xviii. 36.

concept. The ultimate aim of the evangelist is not to urge a social salvation as such, but he finds the spirit of love and service within the beloved community an essential factor in that relationship to Christ which is eternal life. The correlation of these two aspects of life in the mysticism of the Fourth Gospel is admirably discussed by Miss Underhill.[36] She says:

"The promise of the Paraclete, the coming of the exalted Christ, the eucharistic discourses are so many artistic presentations of this same thing: the participation of the regenerate human consciousness in Eternal Life. John *knew* this by practical experience; and trying to express it, sometimes resorted to one image and sometimes to another. It is impossible to extract a consistent, dogmatic system from his utterance, for though he sometimes tries to be a theologian, he remains at heart a realist and a poet.

"In the end, all philosophical language came to seem to him inadequate, and he resorted as so many mystics after him to the heart's intuition of its Home and Father, 'that dim silence where lovers lose themselves,' as the only definition of God which did not defeat its own end. 'We have known and have believed the love that God hath for us. God is love and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him.' This, which was destined to be one of the fundamental ideas of Christian mysticism, which fought and conquered the Neo-platonic concept of God as the supreme object of knowledge and contemplation as a 'gnostic' act, was John's most characteristic contribution to the interpretation of the Christian life. His was the piercing vision that discovered that the Spirit of Love is one with the Spirit of Truth, and that only those who love will ever understand."

With full recognition of this manifold character of the mysticism of the Fourth Gospel, we discover in

[36] Evelyn Underhill, *The Mystic Way*, Dent, 1913, p. 252.

the handling of the "knowledge" concept as it figures in religious experience, a pressure in the mind of the author for recognition of reflective elements. This pressure reveals itself (1) by his steady insistence upon belief in the claims of Jesus as basal in religious experience, (2) by his frequent appeals to witness, or testimony upon which such a belief may rest, (3) by the identification of Truth with the heart of his message, and the emphasis upon the philosophical soundness of the religious experience which he advocates.

This is but a glimpse of the handling of the concept in the Gospel. It is merely the external setting which we have seen. We need closer examination of both the content and the process of the "knowledge" side of this mystical experience. But before we direct ourselves to closer inquiry within the Gospel itself, we may profitably turn to the environment in which the Gospel arose, to see how in other religious systems which the author may have touched, the concept "knowledge" was handled.

By such a study, we should gain some light on the question of the motivation for the concept in our Gospel. If we can see the concept in the Gospel as reaction, either favorable or unfavorable to the world of thought which surrounded the author, we shall be in a better position to estimate the actual content of the experience in the mind of the Johannine writer.

III

ITS USE IN CONTEMPORARY RELIGIONS

(1) *In Historic Judaism*

THE evidence for presupposing a general background of Jewish thought behind the Fourth Gospel has been frequently assembled. Strachan, Westcott, Drummond and others have pointed to the author's familiarity with the ideas and customs of Judaism, have cited his appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures, and have called attention to his Semitic modes of expression in asserting their claim to the Jewish authorship of the Gospel.

Whether one accepts or rejects their conclusion, one cannot but accept the truth of their premise that the author was familiar with and the user of much that was Jewish in thought and expression. And since that is the case, we naturally wish to press the question as to whether the author found in historic Judaism the influences which tended to produce the emphasis upon "knowledge of God" which we have been examining. How does the concept figure in Hebrew religious thought?

In general, the religious interests of the Hebrews, as they reveal themselves to us in the Old Testament writings, were practical rather than philosophical. Their history, their law, their songs, their prophecy, all reveal the pragmatic rather than the speculative interests of religion. Only in the Wisdom literature

is there evident the dawning of philosophical thinking, and even there the concern is rather with morals, the practical everyday urge toward the good life, than with any metaphysical speculation about man and his relation to the universe or to God.

The early stages of Hebrew religion, moreover, had a national rather than an individual focus. Recognition of Jahweh as the protector and guide of the nation was its keynote. Josephus commented upon this characteristic of Hebrew religion as follows: "Our law-giver ordained our government to be what, by a strained expression, may be termed a theocracy, ascribing the sovereignty and authority to God." [1]

This description of the primitive legal formulation of early times holds good not only for that era but for the centuries which followed it. Israel's religion in its beginnings was an affair of the nation rather than of the individual. The covenant relation stressed by all four of the Pentateuchal strands of writing gave ethical content to its national bond, and in this they were distinguished from contemporary tribal or national religions which stressed the tie of blood as of supreme importance. It was a compact between God and the nation, and personal religion was submerged in the social bond.

For purposes of our study, then, we may dismiss as irrelevant such uses of the Hebrew verb יָדַע (to know), applied to Jahweh, as appear in the early strands of writing, of which Exodus vi.7 is typical:

"And I will take you to me for my people and will be to you a God and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God." [2]

[1] Apion, II, 17; Whiston's translation, Bohn's Standard Library, London, 1890, p. 241.

[2] So also Exod. vii. 17; viii. 22; x. 2; xiv. 18; xvi. 12.

Recognition that Jahweh is their Deity and commands their allegiance as a nation is all that is implied here. In Judges, national defection is described as failure to know God.

"There arose another generation which knew not God";

and in I Samuel the figure is carried over into individual life, to indicate moral deficiency on the part of an individual, but no personal relationship between the individual and God is implied:

"Now the sons of Eli were base men; they knew not Jehovah."[3]

In the early stages of Hebrew religion as it is reflected in the writings of the Old Testament, there is no thought of any relationship between God and man, individual enough to serve even as a basis of comparison with a mystical expression of religion where individual values are paramount.

It is in the prophetic period that the beginnings of individualized religious experience make their appearance in Hebrew religion, but even here the first concern is social experience rather than individual. "Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream,"[4] is typical not only of Amos but of the teaching of the writing prophets as a group. Ethical relationships in daily life are the first concern of prophetic religion.

But as spokesman for Jahweh, the prophet himself often appears as exponent of an individual mystical experience. Amos, disclaiming any professional prophetism, cried out:

"I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore-trees and Jehovah took me from following after the flock and

[3] I Sam. ii. 12. [4] Amos v. 24.

Jehovah said unto me: Go prophesy unto my people Israel."[5]

Jeremiah, reluctant to undertake the prophetic office, had some personal religious experience which convinced him that Jehovah had called him from his birth, and when the hand of the Lord reached out and touched his mouth, he was constrained to speak.[6] Isaiah with his great vision in the temple, Ezekiel with his trances, Zechariah with his symbolic visions, all were conscious of intimate personal relations with God of such a nature that they felt competent to speak as the representatives of God to the people. The regular phenomena of "vision and voice" of mystical experience are repeatedly cited by the prophets as evidence that they themselves have been in immediate contact with deity and are empowered to speak the will of God to the people.

But not merely in the personal experiences of the prophets themselves do we find traces of individualized religious experience. The actual teaching of the prophets shows a reaching out toward the conception that knowledge of God is not only necessary as a basis for the national covenant relation, but essential as a spur to the individual for his performance of those duties which constitute his side of the ethical bond. Here it is not always easy to distinguish between the individual and the social emphasis in the writer's thought, and, at best, we have only occasional flashes of insight that glimpse the individual relationship. It is by no means a settled current of thinking, nor is it clearly defined in the minds of the writers.

Such hints that "knowledge of God" is a personal as well as a national experience appear in Hosea's

[5] Amos vii. 14-15. [6] Jer. i. 9.

writing. Hosea affirmed that the people were being destroyed for lack of knowledge [7] and analyzed the corruption of his day as due to the fact that "there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in the land." [8] His contrast between the ethical and the cultic expressions of religion implies that the ethical is based upon knowledge of God:

"For I desire goodness and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings." [9]

In every case where Hosea uses the concept of "knowledge of God," he has linked with it some notion of the ethical expression of religion, which would lead us to think that he has in mind rather the apprehension of the moral nature of God than an individual experience of God which could be termed mystical in nature. The correlation is shown in the following chart.

"There is no knowledge of God in the land.	There is nought but swearing and breaking faith, and killing and stealing and committing adultery.
My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge,	seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God.
I desire goodness and not sacrifice and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.	But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant."

Apprehension of the moral nature of God would compel an ethical program of life, and we should leave

[7] Hos. iv. 6. [8] iv. 1. [9] vi. 6.

it here, were it not for the general context into which the correlation of ideas is set. This God whose moral nature acts as a compulsion upon life is also a God of infinite tenderness and yearning toward his people. The figures under which Hosea portrays that love are the figures of individual human relationships.

"When Israel was a child, I knew him." [10]

"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" [11]

Without the picture of Jahweh, tender, yearning, loving even through the unfaithfulness of his erring people, the prophet's scroll is not complete. It is the nation over which Jahweh yearns, not the individual, but perhaps it is not too fanciful to see in the tender relationships, here pictured of father and child, husband and wife, a foreshadowing of more individualized concepts of religious experience.

In Isaiah a mere suggestion of the same reaching out toward personal knowledge of God is found in his call for the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah in the national deliverer,[12] and in the two passages which attribute the misfortune of the people to their lack of knowledge of the ways of Jahweh.[13] But in Ezekiel's oft-recurring formula, "that they may know that I am Jahweh," [14] the thought is wholly that of the social recognition of God as sovereign and lord. As Kautzsch has explained:

"This is as much as to say that my absolute omnipotence, my absolute sovereignty over all the peoples of the earth, my inviolable holiness may be brought to their consciousness." [15]

[10] xi. 1. [11] xi. 8.

[12] Isa. xi. 2. [13] v. 13; i. 3. [14] Ezek. xxix. 21; xxx. 26, etc.

[15] Kautzsch, Art. *The Religion of Israel,* Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible,* Extra Vol., p. 702.

It is the old formal recognition of Jahweh as the national Deity with no hint of any individual knowledge which constitutes the basis of mystical religion.

Deutero-Isaiah's impassioned cry for understanding of the relationship of Jahweh to his creation brings a blending of the idea of a formal recognition of the sovereignty of Jahweh, with an appreciation of his tenderness to man:

"Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? . . . It is he that sitteth above the circle of the earth. Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard? The everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not neither is weary. He giveth power to the faint, and to him that hath no might, he increaseth strength." [16]

It is with the prophet Jeremiah that we find the closest affiliations with the concept with which we are concerned; the shy, sensitive poet-prophet, whose tender sympathy with mankind, whose deep spiritual understanding have given him the place of preëminence among the Hebrew prophets. Suffering intensely with the knowledge that the people "proceed from evil to evil" and know not Jehovah,[17] he urges that the wise man shall not glory in his wisdom, nor the mighty man in his might, nor the rich man in his riches;

"But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he hath understanding and knoweth me, that I am Jehovah who exerciseth loving-kindness, justice, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith Jehovah." [18]

[16] Isa. xl. 21 ff. [17] Jer. ix. 3. [18] ix. 23-24.

This is an essentially different concept from the recognition of Jahweh as tribal Deity, and if it does not pass over into the realm of mystical experience, it is at least on the road to it. It is individual appreciation of the values for which Jahweh stands, knowledge of his ethical nature, and individual appropriation of those values in human life.

Jeremiah represents Jahweh as saying that he will give the people a heart to know him,[19] and his finest vision of the future brings him closest to the concept which we have before us for study. As he looked into the future, he saw the perfect relationship between man and God, as fellowship, communion, based upon man's knowledge of God, and expressing itself in ethical fruits which were the natural result of that spiritual kinship:

"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, saying Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them saith Jehovah; for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."[20]

With such a view, the Fourth Gospel writer would not have been out of harmony. He has carried the idea much farther. With him it is an intensely personal relationship; it is the constant mood of the soul; it is filled with a rich mystical and ethical content. Here, in the teaching of the prophet, it is a flash of insight, not sustained throughout; it is more diffuse, less personal, less mystical, and the ethical implications are only hinted, but for both, there is the claim that there is a fundamental quality in religious experience which consists in "knowing God," and knowing Him

[19] xxiv. 7. [20] xxxi. 34.

directly without the mediation of any merely human teacher or friend.

The Psalter gives many glimpses of genuinely personal religious experience:

"Jehovah is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
Jehovah is the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?" [21]

"Cast me not away from they presence
And take not thy holy spirit from me." [22]

"In thee, O Jehovah, do I take refuge." [23]

And particularly in Psalm lxxiii,

"I am continually with Thee,
Thou hast holden my right hand;
. . . . .
Whom have I in heaven but Thee?
And there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee," [24]

the sense of immediate communion with God is expressed. There is one psalm of the late Persian or early Greek period,[25] in which the parallelism of the Hebrew verse structure suggests that knowledge of the name of Jahweh is closely related to love of Him, and that both constitute a bond of fellowship between man and God:

"Because he hath set his love upon me therefore will I deliver him:

[21] xxvii. 1. [22] li. 11. [23] xxxi. 1.
[24] lxxiii. 25. Cf. Also Psalms xxiii, xxvi, xxviii.
[25] Cf Briggs, *The Psalms in I.C.C.*, p. 282; so dated also by Hitzig.

I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.
He shall call upon me and I will answer him." [26]

The general context of the psalm shows that the individual relationship with God is the goal of religious experience in the poet's mind, and here again, we find ourselves in an atmosphere of religious thought which if not parallel with that of the Fourth Gospel, is at least tending in its direction.

The idea of "knowledge" as a factor in religious experience figures in canonical Hebrew writings in the wisdom concept, and while this idea is carried over and developed more fully in the extra-canonical writings of both Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism, it will not be out of place for us to discuss it here as a unit.

What the early Jewish sages meant by "wisdom" was that practical common-sense which enables man to live a sane and balanced life. It was to be sought, not in and for itself as an abstract principle, but because, as piety, it secures the favor of God and all material blessings. It is concerned with the details of the daily round of life. Prudence, sagacity, virtue are all akin to it. Its motives are often on a low plane, merely self-interest and self-protection. In this earlier stage, wisdom has been described as a "kind of common-sense philosophy of life [27] with a strong religious flavor." [28]

As time went on, however, wisdom became a poetic personification and gathered to itself more philosophical notions, and finally became a true hypostasy, in

[26] Ps. xci. 14.

[27] Prov. ii. 3, 8-10; x. 27; xvi. 20. Ps. xxxvii, etc.

[28] Quoted by W. T. Davidson in "Hebrew Wisdom" in Peake's *Commentary on the Bible,* p. 343.

which pious Jews saw a revelation of God himself. Proverbs viii represents a personification which has elements suggestive of something more than a mere literary figure, and in the Book of Wisdom, the hypostatization is unmistakable:

"Wisdom is more mobile than any motion:
Yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason of her pureness.
For she is a breath of the power of God,
And a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty:
Therefore can nothing defiled find entrance into her.
For she is an effulgence from everlasting light,
And an unspotted mirror of the working of God,
And an image of goodness.
And she, though but one, hath power to do all things:
And remaining in herself, reneweth all things;
And from generation to generation passing into holy souls,
She maketh them friends of God and prophets." [29]

The preëxistence and the comprehensive work of wisdom is indicated in Sirach:

"He created me from the beginning before the world.
The memorial of me shall never cease." [30]

"I came forth from the mouth of the Most High
And as a mist I covered the earth." [31]

Like other quasi-hypostases of Judaistic thinking, such as the Word of God, the Glory of God, the Spirit of God, wisdom serves the need created by the concept of a transcendent God, of intermediary between God and man, and is itself a product of Greek influence upon Hebrew thought.

[29] Wisd. of Sol. vii. 24-27.
[30] Sir. xxiv. 9.
[31] Sir. xxiv. 3.

As the concept touches our problem, its affiliations are not with the personal mysticism of the Gospel but with the formal introduction to it expressed through the Logos concept. The complex relationships illustrated by that concept are a study by themselves, and we must be content with only a glimpse at them. And since the gateway by which the Logos concept entered the Fourth Gospel thought was almost unquestionably the religious philosophy of Philo, we shall find it convenient to treat the concept there in relation to Philo.

Not in the formal hypostasy (for the hypostasy is itself an evidence of foreign influence upon Judaism) is characteristic Judaistic thinking represented in the thought of the Fourth Gospel. And, on the whole, the canonical Hebrew writings live in a different sphere of thought from that of the Fourth Gospel. Their practical interests, their concern with social rather than with individual religious experience give them a prevailingly non-mystical character. Only occasional instances of personal experience which may be characterized as mystical appear in the self-revelations of the prophets, and in the lyric expressions of the Psalms.

Occasionally, also, prophetic teaching strikes a note which leads us toward the mystical. Notably in Jeremiah, the thought of "knowing God" as basal to the ethical expression of religion is made articulate and is given an individual emphasis through the figure of human relationships of tenderness and love. These are the sporadic beginnings of a temper of religious thought which when carried to full expression might express itself in the language of the Fourth Gospel: "This is life eternal that they should know Thee."

(2) *In Palestinian Judaism*

We have seen that canonical Hebrew writings offer only faint foreshadowings of the mood which is characteristic of the Fourth Gospel, and we turn to the later period directly preceding the Christian era, and coincident with it, to see what religious development is there evidenced. Schürer has pointed out that there were two main concerns upon the minds of Jews in the period directly preceding the beginning of Christianity: zeal for the law of God, and the hope of a better future.[1] Pharisaism found itself represented by two schools of thought not, to be sure, antagonistic to each other, but one representing one of these emphases at its height, and the other representing the other.

Legalistic Pharisaism, which became the parent of *Talmudic* Judaism, was the exponent of the idea that correct observance of the law of God was the center of religion. Apocalyptic Judaism, which was the forerunner of Christianity, concerned itself most definitely with the hope of a better future, apocalyptically conceived. These interests figure in the literary expressions of religion in such concepts as the Messianic kingdom, the Messiah, the eternal validity of the Law, an increasingly transcendent notion of God with resultant intermediaries between God and man, and a future life for man conceived of in widely disparate ways.

These controlling interests preclude any considerable development in the direction of mystical religion. But

[1] Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Christ,* Div. II, Vol. III, p. 1.

Cf. Charles, *Religious Development between the Testaments,* p. 33.

certain trends of thought which appear in the writings of this period in Palestine appear to be leading in a direction which will make possible mystical development therefrom.

The Palestinian writings of this period exhibit an increasing tendency toward universalism. The old particularistic emphasis of historic Judaism had tended to bring national religion to the fore and to suppress the development of individual religion. Some protests against the particularistic emphasis appear, notably in the prophetic writings, but in the late Palestinian writings universalism gradually displaces the older notion.

Even here the earlier documents are not released from the particularistic notion. The *Book of Jubilees* holds it a crime punishable by death to marry a Gentile, and the man who gives his daughter in marriage to a Gentile is held worthy to be stoned to death.[2] And Sirach, though not wholly bound to the narrow view,[3] still sees Israel, as Jubilees does, the central nation upon earth.

"For every nation he appointeth a ruler,
But Israel is the Lord's portion." [4]

"For there are many nations and many peoples, and all are His, and over all hath He placed spirits in authority to lead them astray from Him. But over Israel He did not appoint any angel or spirit, for He alone is their ruler, and He will preserve them and require them at the hand of His angels and His spirits and at the hand of all His powers in order that He may preserve them and bless them and that they may be His and He may be theirs from henceforth forever." [5] But the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs,* which

[2] Jub. xxx. 7.
[3] Sir. xviii. 13-14.
[4] Sir. xvii. 17.
[5] Jub. xv. 31-32.

Charles dates 109-107 B.C.,[6] only a little later than the *Book of Jubilees,* sounds a strong universalistic note, and the later additions to the book are in the same spirit:

"And by thee and Judah shall the Lord appear among men, saving every race of men."[7]

"He [God] shall save Israel and all the Gentiles."[8]

"The light of the law which was given to lighten every man."[9]

Aboth,[10] the latest in compilation of the Palestinian writings before the Rabbinic era, places no restrictions on the love of God to man.

"Beloved is man that was created in the image of God."[11]

Such a direction of thought, away from the particularistic, national emphasis in religion, is a necessary prerequisite for the growth of any settled mystical temper of mind. Certain individuals in historic Judaism had achieved that step, and some had gone far enough to take on something approaching a mystical religious attitude, but universalism did not become a habit of thought until this later period. Palestinian Judaism does not take the further step into genuinely mystical concepts, but it has built the bridge without which the step could not be taken.

[6] Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha,* Vol. II, p. 289.
[7] *Test. of Levi,* ii. 11.
[8] *Test. of Ash,* vii. 3.
[9] *Test. of Levi,* xiv. 4.
[10] Aboth as a compilation was not complete until c.200 A.D., but its material covers a period of from three to four centuries.
[11] Aboth, iii. 19.

In the second place, the extra-canonical Palestinian literature evidences an increasing recognition of the place of the individual in the cosmic scheme. This is but the necessary corollary of the universal interest. Bousset has shown how the personal religious emphasis which we have seen expressed in the Psalms and some of the prophets had suffered during the Maccabean period through the inevitable discouragement that followed upon suffering and distress, but how after the Maccabean period it arose in new garb, now united with an eschatological purpose.[12] Charles cites as one of the outstanding characteristics of the apocalyptic school of writers, this uniting of the ideas of the destiny of the nation and the destiny of the individual, and shows that the emergence from this synthesis was the doctrine of the resurrection, a genuine achievement of late Jewish thought.[13]

How truly this concept of a future life for the individual is a product of the apocalyptic school of thinkers is evident in the fact that it figures in canonical Old Testament writings only in Job (and there only indirectly) [14] and in Isaiah and Daniel,[15] in both of which latter cases, the passages are truly apocalyptic in spirit. It comes forward boldly in the later Palestinian writings in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,* in the *Book of Jubilees,* in the Psalms of Solomon, in the *Assumption of Moses,* and in *II Baruch.*

[12] Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im Neutestamentlichen Zeitalter,* 1903, p. 279.

[13] Charles, *Religious Development between the Testaments,* pp. 110-117.

[14] Job xiv. 13-15; xix. 25-27.

[15] Isaiah xxvi. 14,19; Dan. xii. 2, 3, 13.

"In what shape will those live who live in that day? Or how will the splendor of those who are after that time continue?" [16]

"They who hold fast to Him are for the life of eternity, and all the glory of man is for them." [17]

Again, the writings now under consideration do not take the step which brings the concept into direct relationship with the type of religious experience which is characteristic of the Fourth Gospel. They have not made this individual emphasis in religious experience take the form of a personal and direct communion with God, but they have shaped it to the interests that were primary in that social order—release from present hardship either through apocalypticism or through a developed legalism. But they have made their contribution toward the later concept by freeing the individual from the social group and considering him as a unit worthy of, and capable of religious experience apart from the status of the nation as a whole.

In the third place, Palestinian Judaism in these centuries was building the way for Christian thought, and particularly that emphasis in Christian thought which was characteristic of the Fourth Gospel by its ethicizing and spiritualizing of religious values. There is a steady and unmistakable movement in the direction of the appreciation of the ethical and spiritual aspects of religion, which appears in the non-legalistic group of writings, as reaction from the cultic emphasis. This tendency appears in the Psalms of Solomon:

"Faithful is the Lord to them that love Him in truth,
To them that endure His chastening,
To them that walk in the righteousness of His commandments,

[16] II Bar. xlix. 2 ff. [17] Zadokite Work v. 6.

In the law which He commanded us that we might live."[18]

But in no one of the Palestinian pseudepigraphic works is this spiritualizing tendency more strikingly shown than in the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*.[19] In the famous passage on forgiveness the high ethical note is struck:

"Love ye one another from the heart; and if a man sin against thee, speak peaceably to him, and in thy soul hold not guile, and if he repent and confess, forgive him. And if he deny it, do not get into a passion with him, lest catching the poison from thee, he take to swearing, and so thou sin doubly."[20]

Twice the command is given to love the Lord and one's neighbor,[21] and the closing words of Issachar's testament bring forward both these aspects of religion:

"I shared my bread with the poor.
I wrought godliness; all my days I kept truth:
I loved the Lord,
Likewise also every man with all my heart."[22]

Again, there is no projection of this mode of thought into the realm of true mystical experience, but there

[18] Psalms of Sol. xiv. 1.

[19] The *Testaments of the Twelve* was never accepted officially or otherwise by the Pharisees. It was never authoritative save in certain circles of Pharisaic mystics who must in due time have found a congenial home in the bosom of the rising Christian church. . . . So little did the Pharisaic legalists . . . appreciate this work that they did not think it even worth preserving. For its preservation we are indebted to the Christian Church." Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

[20] *Test. of Gad.* vi. 3 ff.

[21] *Test. of Dan.* v. 3; and *Test. of Iss.* v. 2.

[22] *Test. of Iss.* vii. 5-6.

is a feeling after the concept that there is a connection between man's ethical life and his "love of God," and that connection lies in the realm of individual experience. It is not a far step from this achievement to the realm of mysticism that is ethically conditioned.

From the two main interests of Palestinian religion in the centuries which just preceded it, the Fourth Gospel definitely turned away. Its steady reiteration of the fact that "the Jews" were hostile to Jesus, its affirmation of the mystical values of personal fellowship in religion are testimony to its rejection of the legalistic emphasis in Palestinian Judaism. Its spiritualizing of eschatological expectation shows its reaction from the materialistic hopes of the Palestinian apocalyptic school.

To the author of the Fourth Gospel, eternal life is already the possession of the believer, who has received it by means of his spiritual rebirth into the truth. Death itself is no break in the continuity of existence, but merely a natural gateway into a fuller realization of what man now partially possesses. The second coming of Jesus was not to be outwardly manifest [23] but was to take place in the hearts of believers, an inward and spiritual presence, permanent, universal, free from the limitations of Jesus's earthly life.[24] The judgment was not future and epochal, but a continuous process, present, automatic and involuntary, inward and spiritual on man's part, dependent merely on man's reaction to Jesus as revealer of Light.[25]

All this is a definite correction of Semitic eschatological ideas, a purposeful spiritualization of popular concepts. A few passages, to be sure, regarding the judgment and "the last day" seem to hold with the

[23] xiv, 17, 22, 23; xvi. 22; x. 16. [24] xiv. 3.
[25] xii. 31, 48; iii. 19, 36; i. 12.

older view,[26] but these passages are usually treated as reflections of popular Christian dogma, not yet fully assimilated to the author's own prevailing scheme of thought.[27]

On the whole, the Fourth Gospel presents itself as a reaction from these two characteristic emphases of Palestinian Judaism of the time. In certain subsidiary trends of thought, however, in its increasing emphasis on universalism, in its stress on the importance of the individual as a unit in religious experience, in its concern with the ethical and spiritual values of religion, Palestinian Judaism appears at least a favorable soil for the growth of a mysticism which might express itself in terms of personal knowledge of God.

How far these strains of thought are themselves a product of Greek influence upon Palestinian thought, it is hard to say. Accounts of inspiration like that of *IV Ezra* xiv.38 ff. and *II Baruch* xx.5, which are ecstatic in character, or of the journey of the soul to heaven in *Ethiopic Enoch,*[28] the present writer holds with Dieterich[29] must be considered as results of contact with Hellenic-Egyptian thought and cannot be considered as typically Jewish. The syncretistic process did not leave Judaism outside its pale, and the Enoch literature itself is testimony to the composite nature of Jewish thought in this era.

It may be also that these directions of thought which we have been noting are also the result of Greek influence, although they seem more closely assimilated to the thought which we know is indigenous to the soil. And on the whole, we recognize

[26] v. 28-9; xii. 48.
[27] Scott, *The Fourth Gospel,* p. 216.
[28] *Enoch,* xxxix. 3.
[29] Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie,* p. 199.

that apocalyptic and legalistic Judaism in their characteristic grooves of thought offer but indirect affiliations with the concept which is before us for study.

(3) *In Hellenistic Judaism*

It is a more difficult task to appraise the religious ideas of Hellenistic Judaism and to estimate their influence on the mysticism of the Fourth Gospel. Alexandria, the literary center of Hellenistic Judaism, had become the vortex of rapidly changing thought and expression in the field of both religion and philosophy. Religious and philosophical systems of widely varying types here found themselves in close contact with each other, and here yielded themselves to the give and take of a genuinely syncretistic age.

Judaism, released from its geographical isolation, and of necessity emancipated from the bonds of nationalistic interest, had shown unprecedented flexibility in its adaptation of ideas and practices to the new social order. The general environment of tolerance, of eclecticism in the intellectual life of this cosmopolitan city not only brought Jewish religion in rapport with Greek thought, but compelled a harmonization of the moral earnestness of the former with the speculative freedom of the latter.

Deliberate intent to recommend Judaism to the Greek world is seen in such early work of the Alexandrian Jews as the Septuagint and the letter of Aristeas, which relates the miraculous origin of the Septuagint as apology for the translation. Less self-consciously defensive of Judaism, more truly assimilated into Greek modes of thought, are the *Sybilline Oracles,* both *III* and *IV Maccabees* and the *Wisdom of Solomon.* The latter work stands as one of the finest

products of the Hellenistic-Jewish alliance in thinking, and is probably the best example, previous to Philo, of the actual transfer of Jewish religious thought into the categories of Greek philosophical expression.

Sometimes, however, in this work the two strands of thought lie side by side, without being actually assimilated to each other. In Chapter xii, a prayer of Solomon represents God in the ancient Jewish fashion as directly accessible to man, and as hearing man's prayer directly:

> "But thou, being sovereign over thy strength, judgest in gentleness,
> And with great forbearance dost thou govern us:
> For the power is thine whensoever thou metest,"

while Chapters i-xi have represented Him as transcendent and inaccessible to man, except through the agency of wisdom which serves as intermediary between God and man. We have previously noted the development of the wisdom concept here, as an hypostatized intermediary necessitated by the increasing transcendence in the concept of God.

But wisdom is not always hypostatized, for *IV Maccabees* has devoted itself to a philosophical discussion of the Divine Reason and its power to control the animal nature of man. The author states his theme:

> "Our inquiry, then, is whether the Reason is supreme master over the passions."

Both by his choice of word (λογισμός) and by his definition,[1] the author has distinguished his "Reason"

[1] i. 15.

from "the Word" or "Wisdom" as an hypostasis, to indicate "the power of reasoning" as against a divine emanation. "Reason" as a guide for life, and "wisdom" as an intermediary between God and man, are the emphases of Hellenistic Judaism in general which lie closest to our concept. But it is not until the work of Philo that they are brought into close relationship with the individual's mystic experience of God.

"The great antithesis," says Miss Julia Wedgewood, "of all human thought is that of Judaism and Hellenism. It is hardly possible for us to conceive of another moral and intellectual contrast so striking, so complete, so exhaustive of all the tendencies that belong to human endeavor and interest." [2] But harmonization of that great antithesis was attempted and was to a degree achieved by Philo, and the result is most significant for us, because of the influence of Philo's religious thought on the Fourth Gospel.

The discussion of the Logos doctrine, as it found its way through the intricate maze of Oriental, Jewish, and Hellenistic thought to the Fourth Gospel has been voluminous and thorough.[3] It is not necessary for us to traverse that ground here, but merely to remind ourselves of the results of investigation and reflection upon it. The problem is recognized as more complex than was formerly thought.

No longer can we dismiss the origin of Philo's Logos doctrine by saying that it was a fusion of the Jewish "wisdom" concept with Platonic ideas, the

[2] Julia Wedgewood, *The Moral Ideal,* p. 246.

[3] This paper assumes without argument the organic unity of Prologue and Gospel.

References need not be cited for the refutation of Harnack's famous paper *Über das Varhältniss des Prologs des Vierten Evangeliums zum Ganzen Werk,* 1892.

Heraclitean Logos, and the Stoic "powers" of nature and reason. These elements there were, and these are, no doubt, the ultimate sources, but they themselves had undergone transformation before their adoption by Philo, and other sources may be traced. Pfleiderer believes that Philo was indebted to Persian religion for his idea of the six powers, headed by the Logos with its creative power, because of their correspondence in nature, as mediating beings, emanations, and in function, as creative intelligence, power, goodness, etc., with the six Amesha Spentas which surround the throne of Ahura Mazda.[4]

Bousset,[5] following Bréhier,[6] has traced the complicated history of the term Logos in its relation to Hellenistic religion, and while giving full recognition to the originality of Philo's thinking, finds the roots of the concept in popular Hellenistic speculation as represented by the mystery religions of redemption.[7] He emerges from his investigation with the conclusion that Philo's Logos, though it plays a mediating rôle between God and the world, is, still, less a metaphysical principle than a mythological figure. Reitzenstein's philological studies have convinced him that the Logos concept as it passed to Philo and Christianity took its character from Egyptian mythology as represented in the Hermetic speculation.[8]

Krebs, in the appendix to his Religionsgeschichtliche

[4] Pfleiderer, *Primitive Christianity,* Vol. III, p. 43, Putnams, New York, 1910.

[5] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos,* Göttingen, 1913.

[6] Bréhier, *Les Idées Philosophiques et Religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie,* Paris, 1908.

[7] Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums,* p. 519, note 3, gives an interesting list of terms borrowed by Philo from the language of the Mystery Religions.

[8] Reitzenstein, *Poimandres.*

study, "Der Logos als Heiland im Ersten Jahrhundert," has brought correction to bear upon Reitzenstein's claims for Egyptian-Greek speculation as determining in the development of Christian thought, especially in the Fourth Gospel, by showing in parallel columns that what Reitzenstein finds as sources for the Fourth Gospel in Hermetic texts may be paralleled in the Old Testament, and presents the opinion that the Fourth Gospel is closer to the Old Testament than to the Hermetic literature.*

Dr. Rendel Harris, by a brilliant and scholarly examination of the relationship of the Fourth Gospel to the wisdom writing of the Old Testament, arrives at the conclusion that the prologue to the Fourth Gospel found its derivation there. Striking parallels between the language of Proverbs viii and the prologue are adduced, and the ascription of Sapiential titles to Jesus is cited as proof that the early Christian movement accepted its theology from the wisdom field of thought.[9]

* Krebs's summary of the examination is as follows: *"Speculative Begründung, innere Verknüpfung der Soteriologie mit der Christologie, Darlegung in der Sprache der Zeitphilosophie und populären religiosen Begriffswelt, das ist was die Erlösungslehre am Ende des ersten Jahrhunderts durch den Logosbegriff gewohnt hat"* (pp. 116-7).

[9] Rendel Harris, *The Origin of the Prologue to St. John's Gospel,* Cambridge, 1917. The book is reviewed by Prof. E. F. Scott in the *American Journal of Theology,* 1918 (XXII, p. 311), who, giving high praise to the originality of the theory and to the value of the relationship between Proverbs viii and John i disclosed by the study, still objects to the method of analysis on the whole, in that it fails to take account of the whole theological situation in the Mediterranean world in the first century A.D. Its dismissal of the syncretistic religious and philosophical situation will prevent widespread acceptance of the theory, even though its

An attempt to find the origin of the Hellenistic Logos concept in a new quarter has recently been made by Stephen Langdon,[10] who discovers in Babylonian thinking a principle of cosmic reason, which he believes is the source of the Hellenistic concept. W. F. Albright[11] of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem has criticized the theory on both linguistic and philosophical grounds, and has shown that the Babylonian metaphysic was far too primitive to be accounted the source of the Hellenistic concept.

These many attempts to place the source of the Logos concept in various corners of the globe are conclusive evidence that the concept is a genuine fusing of many strands of thought, a blend of elements far more scattered in origin than once we dreamed. To the present writer, there seems no need for denial of the usually accepted view that the direct gateway through which the Fourth Gospel received the concept, however large we may put the figure which indicates its original sources, was the thought of Philo.

Indeed, the evidence seems too strong to resist. An interesting discussion of the influence of Philo on the Fourth Gospel appears in Windisch's "Die Frömmigkeit Philos und ihre Bedeutung für das Christentum."[12] The discussion shows how in fundamental views, in method and in modes of expression, Philo and the Fourth Gospel are akin. "*Johannes und Philo*

contribution to one phase of the problem is recognized as valuable.

Dr. Westcott presents a similar view to Dr. Harris's in his *Gospel According to St. John,* Introd., p. xxxii.

[10] *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Soc.,* 1918, pp. 433-449.

[11] *Journal of Bibl. Lit.,* 1920, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 143 ff.

[12] Windisch, *Die Frömmigkeit Philos und ihre Bedeutung für das Christentum,* Hinrichs, Leipzig, 1909, pp. 112 ff.

haben die gleiche Luft geatmet." [13] *"Er ist der Philo des Neuen Testamentes"* [14] is the summary which Windisch makes of the relationship—this, of course, with the recognition of the wide gulf between them, due to the Fourth Gospel's identification of the Logos with the historic Jesus. *"Auf eine Paradoxie kommt sonach das Verhältnis des Johannes zur alexandrinischen Religionsphilosophie hinaus. Philos Gedankenwelt hat dem Evangelisten einen Kanal gegraben, damit er in das Griechentum eindringe. Aber der Ström der sich in dieses zuvorgegrabene Bett ergoss, zerstörte die Spuren des früheren Wasserlaufes."* [15, 16]

There is naturally a considerable interest in the question as to how determining the Logos of Philo was for the Fourth Gospel. Was the acceptance of the Logos doctrine in the mind of the author of the Gospel anterior to his acceptance of Christianity, or was the concept selected as a convenient vehicle for thought already developed? [17]

For the present writer, Dr. Scott's analysis of the relationship seems most satisfying and convincing.[18] The use of the Logos concept in the prologue only, and there without argument or defense, the swift delineation of its characteristics, the abrupt turn to the

[13] *Op. cit.*, p. 117. [14] *Ibid.*, p. 119. [15] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

[16] The differences in vocabulary between Philo and the Fourth Gospel, which prevent any assumption of literary dependence of the latter upon the former, are shown by Drummond (based on Siegfried's Glossarium) in H. D. B., Extra Vol., p. 207, but reference should also be made to Grill's study which shows similarities between Philo and the Fourth Gospel in both ideas and expression. Grill, *Untersuchungen über die Entstehung des vierten Evangeliums*, I, pp. 106 ff, Leipzig, 1902.

[17] Cf. Stanton, *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, p. 163.

[18] Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 148 ff.

story of Jesus's life, with portrayal of his activity in terms of the Logos function as Life-giver and Light-bringer, but without return to the designation by name, point in the direction of an acceptance of the Logos concept by the evangelist as a well understood doctrine which would serve to introduce and commend his Gospel to the world.

"The question whether the Johannine view corresponds at all points with the Philonic view is in the last resort comparatively unimportant. Probably John himself did not think out his conception with any clearness or fullness. He availed himself of the Logos idea for a practical purpose—to make more intelligible to his own mind and the minds of his readers the divine nature of Jesus Christ. In accepting it, therefore, he does not commit himself to the precise interpretation that Philo placed upon it." [19]

And we must leave it here. It is not for this study to go further into the problem of the origin of the Logos concept than this recognition that already when it reached the hands of Philo, it was a composite figure, blended from many strains of thought, Jewish, Oriental, and Greek, religious, philosophical, mythical, and that by way of Philo it came to the Fourth Gospel and served there as a means to commend the Gospel to the world to which it was directed. But it is for this study to try to discover through the use of this concept and through other phases of Philo's religious philosophy, the place that reason or "knowledge" played in his conception of mystical experience.

For a writer as voluminous and as varied as Philo, it is impossible to achieve with fairness any short sum-

[19] Scott, *The Fourth Gospel,* pp. 148 ff.

mary of his view upon even a single factor in religious experience. As Inge has said of his theology,

"We must expect to find the Greek and Hebrew elements imperfectly fused. It would surpass the genius of any man to harmonize the logical, analytical thought of the Greek, with the vague, indefinite intuitions of Hebrew prophecy." [20]

It is quite beyond the scope of this study to attempt anything approaching a summary of his system, and it is our aim, merely to select for consideration from his system of thought such points as bear directly upon the concept which we have before us for study.

Fundamentally, Philo is at home with Johannine ideas, and in fact with all mystical systems, in the recognition that the heart of religion is the soul's quest for immediate communion with God. Union with God is the aim of life, and even the more speculative abstractions of Philo's system, which seem at first sight to have cosmological rather than theological interests at heart, his reasoning about the infinitude and unknowability of God,[21] the complete transcendence of God,[22] and his discussion of the "divine powers" which are the forms of God's thought, tend actually to a more religious than a speculative end. The "powers" are for the assistance of the soul in its quest for God, and through them alone is union achieved.

"But the soul is afraid by itself to rise up to the contemplation of the living God, if it does not know the road, . . . but the man who follows God does of necessity have for his fellow-travellers all those 'reasons' [23] (λόγοι) which are the attendants of God, which we

[20] Inge, Art. "Alexandrian Theology," in *E. R. E.*, I, p. 308.
[21] de Mundi Opif, 23.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] Better, "rational powers."

are accustomed to call angels, for until a man is made perfect, he uses reason as the guide of his path, . . . but when he has arrived at the height of perfect knowledge, then, running forward vigorously he keeps up with the speed of him who was previously leading him in his way." [24]

Although approached in a quite different fashion, this quest of the soul for God is the primary interest of the Fourth Gospel. Philo is also at one with the mysticism of the Fourth Gospel in his affirmation of life as perfection of being, a quality of living which is a present possibility rather than a future change in nature. In like manner, death is sharply differentiated from physical facts and is associated in truth only with the denial of perfection:

"Death is of two kinds: the one being the death of the man, the other, the peculiar death of the soul—now the death of the man is the separation of his soul from his body, but the death of the soul is the destruction of virtue and the admission of vice." [25]

But our problem concerns itself particularly with the question as to how that union with God which is the goal of life is to be achieved. On God's side, the reaching out for man is through the Logos. As Bentwich has indicated, it is futile to try to formulate any one single, definite and consistent notion of Philo's Logos concept:

"For it is the expression of God in all His multiple and manifold activity, the instrument of creation, the seat of ideas, the world of thought which God first established as the model of the visible universe, the guiding

[24] *De Migr. Abr.* 31, Cohn and Wendland, II, p. 302. The translation is Yonge's in *Bohn's Classical Library.*

[25] *Leg. Alleg.*, I, 33, Cohn and Wendland, I, p. 88.

providence, the sower of virtue, the fruit of wisdom, described sometimes in religious ecstasy, sometimes in philosophical metaphysics, sometimes in the spirit of the mystical poet." [26]

But in this welter of ideas, there emerges steadily the belief that the Logos is the active influence of God, possessing the soul of man and making it live with God.[27] Any achievement in the religious field is primarily a gift which is due to God's grace.

"For when God determined to establish this (Nobility) in us, out of his own unending mercy and love for the human race, he could not find any temple upon earth more beautiful or more suited for its abode than reason." [28]

On man's side, the soul must free itself from the things of sense and give the higher nature, "reason" the precedence.

"But O mind! Take confidence and explain to us how you depart and emigrate from the former things, you who utter things perceptible only by the intellect to those who have been taught to hear rightly, always saying, 'I emigrated from my sojourn in the body when I learned to despise the flesh, and I emigrated from the outward sense when I learned to look upon the objects of outward sense as things which had no existence in reality.'" [29]

But in spite of this urgent necessity for giving reason the ascendency over the flesh, Philo advocates no

[26] Bentwich, *Philo Judæus of Alexandria,* Jewish Pub. Soc. of Amer., Phila., 1900, p. 148.
[27] *Leg. Alleg,* I 15.
[28] *De Virtut Nobilitate* I, Cohn and Wendland, V, p. 325.
[29] *Quis Rer. Div. Hær. XIV,* I, Cohn and Wendland, III, p. 17.

consistent principle of asceticism or withdrawal from ordinary life.

"For in the soul by which the external object of the outward senses is honored as the greatest good, perfect reason is not found to exist; but in the soul in which God walks, the external object of the outward senses is not looked upon as the greatest good. And all those who through the improvement of their reason are adorned in the similitude of the Father in consequence of education, unlearn all subserviency to the irrational impulses of the soul." [20]

It is a question of proportion with him rather than an advocacy of the complete suppression of the life of sense. But he goes on to make it more explicit: As one philosophizes more and more,

"he brings into one place and connects together the three kinds of good things, namely, external things, the things of the body and those concerning the soul, things utterly different from one another in their whole natures; wishing to show that each has need of each, . . . and that which is really the complete and perfect good, is composed of all these things together." [21]

The gift which ultimately comes from God is appropriated by man through the suppression of sense in order that reason may have the preëminence.

But strangely enough, with all this emphasis upon reason as the seat of God's life in man, Philo actually discards it when he comes to the consideration of the highest form of union with God. His account of his own inspiration for writing is illuminating:

[20] *Quod Det. Pot.*, II, Cohn and Wendland, I, p. 259.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 260.

"My soul is wont to be affected with a divine trance and to prophesy about things of which it has no knowledge." [32]

"Many a time have I come with the intention of writing, and knowing exactly what I ought to set down, but I have found my mind barren and fruitless, and I have gone away with nothing done. But at times I have come empty and suddenly have been full, for ideas were invisibly rained down upon me from above, so that I was seized by a Divine frenzy, and was lost to everything, place, people, self, speech, and thought. I had gotten a stream of interpretation, a gift of light, a clear survey of things, the clearest that eye can give." [33]

And he is even more explicit about the necessity for the suspension of the action of the reason if man is to achieve complete union with God:

"He was also of necessity invested with the gift of prophecy, in order that he might through the providence of God learn all those things which he was unable to comprehend by his reason (λογισμῷ); for what the mind (νοῦς) is unable to attain to, that prophecy masters." [34]

In another instance he explains more fully the processes of mystical experience. Four types of ecstatic experience are listed, of which the fourth is typical for prophetic natures. Using Genesis XV. 12, "about the setting of the sun, a trance fell upon him," as a point of departure, Philo allegorizes to show how the human reason must give place to divine inspiration if one is to attain the highest type of ecstasy:

"And under the symbol of the sun, he intimates our mind (νοῦς): for what reasoning is in us, that the sun

[32] *De Cherubim,* IX, Cohn and Wendland, I, p. 176.

[33] *De. Migr. Abr.,* Bentwich's translation, *op. cit.,* pp. 59-60, Cohn and Wendland, II, p. 275.

[34] *De Vita Mosis,* II, 6, Cohn and Wendland, IV, p. 201.

is, in the world. Since each of them gives light, the one casting a light which is perceptible by the outward sense, to shine upon the universe, and the other shedding beams discernible only by the intellect by means of our apprehensions, upon ourselves. As long, therefore, as our mind still shines around, pouring as it were a noontide light into the whole soul, we being masters of ourselves, are not possessed by any extraneous influence; but when it approaches its setting, then as is natural, a trance which proceeds from inspiration takes violent hold of us, and madness seizes upon us, for when the divine light shines, and the human light sets, then this other rises and shines, and this very frequently happens to the race of prophets; for the mind that is in us is removed from its place at the arrival of the divine spirit, but is again restored to its previous habitation when that spirit departs." [35]

For this expression of the realization of the soul's quest for God, Philo, with all his grounding in the theology of Judaism, with all his true sympathy with the legalistic basis of Mosaic piety, still has turned to Hellenistic categories of thought. The quest of the soul for God is realized through a genuinely ecstatic mystical experience. *"Philo ist der erste Mystiker und Ekstatiker auf dem Boden spezifisch monotheistische Frömmingkeit."* [36] And in one instance at least he has accepted the language of the mystery-religions for the expression of this ecstatic experience:

"Thus also, Moses having fixed his tent outside of the Tabernacle, and outside of all the corporeal army, that is to say, having established his mind so that it should not move, begins to worship God, and having entered

[35] *Quis Rerum Div. Hær.,* Cohn and Wendland, III, p. 60.
[36] Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums,* p. 520. For the analysis of Philo's views and a discussion of their Jewish and Hellenistic sources cf. *ibid.,* p. 512 ff.

into the darkness, that invisible country, remains there performing the most sacred mysteries, and becomes not merely an initiated man, but also an hierophant of mysteries, and a teacher of divine things." [37]

In the last analysis, Philo has dismissed the reason of man as the gateway to union with God. Up to a certain point it serves, but the actual experience of mystical union with God takes place because reason has been suppressed and ecstatic illumination has taken its place.

Our hypothesis that the Fourth Gospel has accepted the Philonic Logos doctrine in its main outlines, with characteristic modifications to suit the purpose of John's own religious thought, and with no commitment of himself to the precise details carried with it in Philo's formulation, leaves us with this question: Does this suppression of the rational faculty in the soul's realization of God become one of the accepted or one of the rejected bits for the Fourth Gospel? Its connections with the Logos doctrine are close, and we could bring our question to a focus here, were it not that this Hellenistic world gave other systems with which our author came into direct contact. We must leave our question open for the examination of the other formulations which were available to him.

(4) *In the Mysteries*

In no field of New Testament study are the problems more challenging than in the search to determine the relationship existing between the early Christian movement and the mystery cults which were current in the Mediterranean world contemporaneously with the early development of Christianity.

[37] *De Gigantibus,* XII, Cohn and Wendland, II, p. 52.

That Christianity did receive an impress from the redemption religions, traceable in both its practices and its thought, most scholars are now ready to grant as historically attested. When that influence began to show itself, how extensive it was, and how intensely it functioned, are still moot points.

Especially keen has been the interest in the question of Paul's debt to the mystery cults, and Dr. Scott's article has brought before us the question of how deeply the Fourth Gospel finds the roots of its mysticism in that quarter.

Among the works which have argued for an intimate relationship between Christianity and the mystery religions, have been Loisy's "Les Mystères païens et le Mystère Chrétien," Reitzenstein's "Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen," Dieterich's "Eine Mithrasliturgie," and Bousset's "Kyrios Christos"; while another group of works represented by Kennedy's "St. Paul and the Mystery Religions," and Clemen's "Primitive Christianity and Its Non-Jewish Sources," have argued that the mystery religions, though not a negligible factor in Christianity's heritage of thought, were far outweighed by the truly determining influence of Jewish thought.

The problem is a large one, and because of our all too meager materials from the cults, a difficult one, which will require patient and persistent effort if a real solution is to be achieved.

Our task is the examination of such materials as we have from these ancient cults that will throw light upon their notions of "knowledge" as it functioned in religious experience. But a word first as to the nature of these religions in general. Farnell defines the term μυστήριον in its strict sense, as a secret worship, the idea of secrecy lying at the root of the word, a secret

"to which only certain privileged people, οἱ μυηθέντες, were admitted, a ritual of purification or other preliminary probation being required before μύησις, and the mystic ceremony itself being so important and perilous that a hierophant was needed to guide the catechumen aright." [1]

But a second characteristic was equally important in the cults as they flourished in the Mediterranean world at the beginning of the Christian era—the notion of salvation or redemption for the individual through the aid of a savior god. These two characteristics were closely united in this, that the object of the μύησις was to place the worshiper in an immediate relationship with the deity, an act which itself constituted the redemptive process, the achievement of an emotional exaltation at the moment, and the assurance of a happy immortality after death.

In all the cults with which we have to deal, a myth, usually arising from a more primitive agrarian or chthonic myth, and usually dealing in some fashion with the experiences of a dying and reviving savior god, was the basis of the cult, and the rites were the reënactment of the myth, with the initiates participating in the mystical drama.

In distinction from the ancient national religions of the Eastern world, the mystery cults bore an individual rather than a social stamp. If, like the Eleusinian mysteries, a cult arose under local auspices and with official connections uniting it with the community organization, even then there was a sharp contrast between its individual emphasis in its dealings with its clientele and the ancient notion of salvation in the ethnic faiths.

Instead of membership taken as a matter of course,

[1] Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, III, p. 130.

because of the accident of birth, affiliation with the mystery cult was a matter of conscious choice on the part of the individual, and was a result of complying with the regulations and meeting the ritual requirements which the individual cult prescribed. In place of the public festival of the national religion, whose object was the securing of the protection and favor of the deity for the community welfare, the mystery cult substituted sacramental rites for the candidates, carefully guarded from the public, and leading to a special ceremony for the initiates, at which the secret was imparted which was itself the guarantee of individual salvation.[2]

Such, in outline, were the distinguishing marks of these popular faiths which were gaining such headway in the Roman Empire at the time of Christianity's early life. Differences in origin and in environment brought differences in practice, ethic, and belief, resulting in the following cults: the Eleusinian mysteries, with their purification rites, their sacred meal, their little passion-play, which gave participation in the emotions of Demeter searching for her daughter; the Dionysus cult, with its crude, orgiastic flesh-eating ceremonies; the Orphic mysteries, the more controlled, sophisticated counterpart of the Dionysus cult, with its cosmological interests and its reaching out after philosophy; the Phrygian Cybele-Attis cult with its mystery-play and its barbarous rites of self-mutilation, and its performance of the "taurobolium;" [3] the Isis-Osiris

[2] Loisy, *op. cit.*, Ch. I.

[3] Late in origin, according to Cumont *(Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism)*, but even so, practices of this nature were not foreign to this age. Hepding (*Attis.*, p. 199 ff.) distinguishes between a primitive taurobolium which was sacrificial in nature and the later one which was the rite of

mysteries from Egypt, with a pantomimic liturgy representing the death and resuscitation of Osiris, and with its genuinely devotional strain of thought; the Mithra from Persia, steadily gaining in prestige, with its savior-god with whom the aspirant became united after seven stages of initiatory rites.

All these were offering religious satisfaction to the Hellenistic world in terms of individual salvation from the trials of this present order of life—a rebirth to immortal life.

We shall not treat of subsidiary factors in these cults, of the accretions of occultism, astrology, magic, their sacerdotal development, their curious eschatological theories, their angelology and demonology, and their various attitudes toward ascetic or sensual practices. Our concern is with the gnosis which was the gift of the deity to the participant in the cult.

In some cases the secret knowledge imparted by the ceremonies seems to have been of a very simple character, merely knowledge of the nature of the rites themselves or of the details of the myth, not shared with the public at large. Belief in the efficacy of this possession of the knowledge of the rites is revealed in the closing lines of the "Homeric hymn to Demeter" which related the Demeter-Kore myth. Demeter at the close of her search, told the story to certain chosen friends, and,

"she showed them the manner of her rites and taught them her goodly mysteries, holy mysteries which none may violate or search into, or noise abroad, for the great curse from the Gods restrains the voice. Happy is he among deathly men who hath beheld these things!

individual initiation into the cult. No clear evidence for the latter appears before the early fourth century.

And he that is uninitiate, and hath no lot in them, hath never equal lot in death beneath the murky gloom."[4]

This is, in general, the type of knowledge represented by the Orphic mysteries, whose cosmological theories led to the belief that man contained within him a spark of the divine nature, which was capable of being extricated from its contaminating participation in matter, by a succession of rebirths. But the process of reincarnation could be facilitated and expedited by participation in the mysteries, knowledge of whose rites constituted the gnosis which was the summum bonum of existence.[5]

But the oldest form of securing knowledge of deity, or union with deity, is, as Dieterich has pointed out, through eating; and in modified, more refined forms, it has been a persistent factor in the practices of religion.[6] In the mystery cults it appears in its crudest form in the Dionysus rites, of eating the raw flesh and drinking the blood of the sacred animal, which was held to be the incarnation of the god himself.[7] By this process, the participant became himself ἔνθεος "full of the god," inspired or possessed.

How far removed this is from any rational processes or appreciative judgments, may be judged by the orgiastic context into which the rite was set, though suggestions of more sober thoughts associated with the rites appear in Euripides in a chorus from "the Bacchæ":

[4] Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Lang: *Homeric Hymns,* p. 209.

[5] F. Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Early Christianity.* Ch. IV.

[6] Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie,* p. 101.

[7] For a description of the rite cf. Loisy, *op. cit.,* p. 29.

"Let reverence keep silent all lips
For the song, which is ever his due to great Dionysus
I sing,
Blessed he, who knowing well
How to lead a holy life,
Gives due honor to the gods,
Joins him to the sacred land
Of the Bacchants in the hills
Cleansed by these holy rites."[8]

Miss Harrison's comment upon this experience is acute; the basis of her summary lies in the psychology of primitive religion. She says:

"We are now at last in a position to say what was the characteristic essence of the worship of Dionysus. The fact, however repugnant, must be fairly faced. This essence was intoxication. But by the very nature of primitive thought, this essence was almost instantly transformed into something deeper and higher than mere physical intoxication. It was intoxication thought of as possession. The savage tastes of some intoxicant for the first time; a great delight takes him, he feels literally a new strange life within him. How has it come about? The answer to him is simple. He is possessed by a god, ἔνθεος, not figuratively but literally and actually; there is a divine thing within him that is more than himself. He is mad, but with a divine madness."[9]

In Mithraism a highly complicated ritual served to typify the ascent of the soul to heaven.[10] More highly developed and refined notions of communion with deity are revealed in the liturgy, where the sacred meal [11]

[8] Lines 70-75.

[9] Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion,* p. 426.

[10] Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie.*

[11] Cumont, *Textes Relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra,* p. 320.

played an important part in the ceremonies of initiation. Justin's famous comparison between the Christian Eucharist and these rites of Mithra is testimony to the close analogies between them. At the close of his description of the Christian Eucharist, Justin says:

"Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can know."[12]

Of the results of this sacramental meal, Cumont says:

"On attendait de ce banquet mystique, surtout de l'absorption du vin sacré, des effets surnaturels: la liqueur enivrante ne donnait pas seulement la vigueur du corps et la prospérité matérielle, mais la sagesse de l'esprit; elle communiquait au néophyte la force de combattre les esprits malfaisants, bien plus, elle lui conférait comme à son dieu, une immortalité glorieuse."[13]

Of the nature of the "sagesse de l'esprit" we should like to know more. The remains from the Mithra cult give us little information of the actual content of the gnosis given, other than to assert the esoteric character of its gifts. The best that the monuments can give us reveals that the knowledge was ritualistic in character—not a set of doctrines, or theories, but an assemblage of rites,[14] and these practices derived from ancient popular religion in Persia with accretions from the astrology of Babylonia, and finally a clothing in the outward garments of Greek ritual religion.[15]

[12] Justin, *Apol.*, I: 66.
[13] Cumont, *op. cit.*, p. 321.
[14] Cumont, *op. cit.*, p. 321.
[15] Loisy, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167.

The publication in 1915 by Grenfell and Hunt in their "Oxyrhynchus Papyri" of a newly discovered Invocation of Isis has given us new light upon the widespread acceptance of the cult, and gives us one phrase indicative of the nature of the secret knowledge which the ritual gave. As the introduction to the text states, the composition of the invocation must have taken place not later than the first century A.D., since the papyrus itself dates from near the beginning of the second century. The long list of places, both in Egypt and outside, at which Isis is honored gives us pause in the realization of the spread of the cult at this time.

In the second part of the invocation, which is a hymn of praise to the goddess, the various aspects of her divinity are extolled. One phrase, doubtless referring to the dreams and visions of the type which Lucius had in the Metamorphoses of Apuleius is noteworthy: "Thou art seen by those who invoke thee faithfully." [16]

This is the highest degree of gnosis that the mystery religion knows, the sight of the deity itself, and the cults had a special term to apply to experiences of that sort—"epoptism," which meant the culmination of all initiatory rites in the vision of the god himself. In this invocation no hints are given of the devices by which man secures the vision, but the vision in Apuleius supplies that lack.

The place which the goddess filled in the everyday life of her followers is shown in the Nysa (Arabia) inscription given by Diodorus in his History [17] (c.27 B.C.), but more fully in the Ios inscription,

[16] Grenfell and Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri XI.*, par. 1380, p. 202, 1, 152.

[17] I, 27; quoted by Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 134.

which is longer but similar in thought. In this inscription, the goddess is hailed, not only as the author of all the institutions of civilization, but as the founder of the laws of the natural world, and designer of human qualities. She it is "who gave and ordained laws unto men, which not one is able to change," [18] and she it was who "showed mysteries unto men."

Plutarch's interpretation of the Isis-Osiris religion also gives this philosophical evaluation of the popular faith. He identifies Osiris with the principle of reason in the universe and designates Isis as the female principle of nature whose essential characteristic is productivity. Isis is responsible for all fruitful processes in Nature, while Osiris was the creator of the rational world.[19]

These commentaries on the popular religion show the tendency toward rationalization, at least in some minds, but how general the practice of thought in relation to the cults was, we have no way to know.

For our purpose, the best source at our command for the understanding of the cultic ceremonies of the Isis-Osiris religion is the record of the initiation of Lucius into the cult, which appears in the eleventh book of the Metamorphoses of Apuleius. Although its date is subsequent to the period which we have under discussion, it does not differ materially from the records of earlier times, and it has this advantage for our purpose, that it is a fuller exposition than we have in any other one document, and that it actually interprets from the point of view of an adherent of the cult, the mystical experiences of the initiatory rites.

We are shown how the initiate must wait for the goddess to make known through her priest her willing-

[18] Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East,* p. 137.
[19] Plutarch, *de Iside et Osiride,* 53 ff.

ness to receive him. We hear of his preliminary rites of purification by bathing, of baptism and of prayer; of his ten days of abstinence and then of the actual initiation; and finally of two later stages of initiation which lead to the installation of the candidate as priest. The point of highest interest in the narrative is the beautiful prayer of Lucius at the close of his first initiatory rites—a prayer expressing the genuine religious emotion called forth by the ceremonies. The goddess is recognized as the giver of all gifts, the controller of man's life, and of the universe. But the heart of it is the expression of the soul's sense of oneness with her:

"My voice hath no power to utter that which I think of thy majesty; no, not if I had a thousand mouths and so many tongues, and were able to continue forever. Howbeit as a good religious person, and according to my poor estate, I will do what I may. I will always keep thy divine appearance in remembrance, and close the imagination of thy most holy godhead within my breast." [20]

This is a far cry from the god-intoxication of the Dionysiac orgies. Here is the sensitive appreciation of a genuinely religious soul, mystical in the nature of its ecstasy. The vision has transported him beyond the limits of ordinary experience, and he believes that it will never pass from him. Some hints of the nature of this mystical experience appear in the narrative. It came as a gift by the grace of heaven, not as a result of noble birth, or by dint of achievement on the part of Lucius. He fulfilled certain conditions but the vision was not earned:

[20] *Apuleius Metamorphoses,* XI, 25; Adlington trans., Loeb Classical Library, p. 585.

"Neither did thy noble lineage, thy dignity, neither thy excellent doctrine anything avail thee." [21]

The prerequisite acts, however, upon which the vision was resultant are enumerated, daily service in the temple, chastity, abstinence from meats.[22] Then when the vision came, its secrets must not be told. Secret books had been studied and a secret charge had been given by the priests.[23] At the ceremony of dedication itself, secret things happened which it is not lawful for the initiate to tell: [24]

"Verily I would tell thee if it were lawful for me to tell; then wouldst thou know if it were convenient for thee to hear; but both thy ears and my tongue should incur the pain of rash curiosity." [25]

The vision is, like all truly mystical experience, ineffable.

Here is the mystery cult at its best, a record of the individual's sense of participation in the divine life through genuinely mystical religious experience. As Kennedy has said, "the description of Apuleius implies something more than mere ecstatic vision, though of course a condition of ecstasy is implied in the ascent of the soul through the elements." [26] Some reflective steps are necessarily present in the solemn preparation for the initiation. The interpretation of the secret books by the priest implies a touch at least of preparation in the intellectual field. And the conception of

[21] XI, 15, Loeb, p. 563.
[22] XI, 20, 21, 22, 23; Loeb, pp. 573-579.
[23] XI, 23; Loeb, p. 579.
[24] XI, 25, p. 581.
[25] XI, 25, p. 583-4.
[26] Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*, p. 102, note 2.

regeneration resultant upon the vision makes its appeal to the rational side of man's nature.

But as we take the vision as a whole, it can hardly be denied that emotional elements predominate. It came by illumination; it gave emotional exaltation; it promised eternal life with the deity who had granted the vision.[27]

In all the gamut of human experience represented by the mystery cults, from the simple rites which themselves constitute the gnosis, from the crude rites where the eating of flesh constituted the process of becoming one with the god, to the higher stages in which a vision experience makes the aspirant aware of deity, the mystery cult stands for something to be *known* in religion. In the space of time between the primitive Dionysiac rites and the vision of Apuleius, a spiritualizing tendency has been at work, a refining influence which gives a different color to the process which gives the secret.

But in the whole scale of that development, knowledge, and not faith, was the summum bonum. Whether the content of the knowledge was a set of rites, whether it took on a speculative character as with Orphism, or whether it was a vision of deity itself, the mystery religion held it as a gift from heaven, to be appropriated by man, not through the rational or intellectual processes, but through the gateway of emotional states.

Myth, rites, sacraments, and visions all appealed primarily to the emotional nature of man. The experience through which he passed was prepared for by ascetic or by orgiastic practices, not by reflective processes, and the result which the experience gave was not a rational conviction but an emotional exaltation.

[27] Cumont, *After-Life in Roman Paganism,* pp. 121 ff.

(5) *In Gnosticism*

The "knowledge" concept lies at the very heart of the great religio-speculative movement known as Gnosticism, since γνῶσις or divine enlightenment is the means by which the soul of man is liberated from imprisonment in evil matter, and gains entrance into the higher world of light. Irenæus in characterizing Gnosticism says of Simon:

"He gives, too, as he affirms, by means of that magic which he teaches, *knowledge* to this effect, that one may overcome those very angels that made the world."[1]

The study of this concept in the Gnostic sects and its possible relation to the concept in the Fourth Gospel is beset with difficulty due to the lack of uniformity in the beliefs and practices covered by the term Gnosticism, to the fact that our sources are all too fragmentary and are so largely the views of opponents rather than adherents of the sects, and to the fact that the sects are a product of a long process of syncretism, of whose origins we know far too little. Its characterization as "the boldest and grandest syncretism the world had ever seen" is not beside the mark.[2]

Harnack's designation of Gnosticism as "the acute hellenization of Christianity"[3] has been shown to be inadequate unless it be expanded to allow for a pre-Christian development of Gnosticism, which in fusing with Christianity produced the result which he describes. Whether Gnosticism was ultimately of Babylonian origin, as Anz[4] would have us believe, or Per-

[1] Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, I, 23:5.
[2] Kurtz, *Church History*, Phila., 1867, I, p. 96.
[3] Harnack, *History of Dogma*, I, p. 226.
[4] Anz, *Ursprung des Gnostizismus*.

sian, as Bousset maintains,[5] or of Egyptian, as Reitzenstein holds,[6] it gathered to itself in its process of development ideas which were at home in all these lands, and, before its fusion with Christianity, offered a system of Oriental speculation which was characteristic of the redemption religion type.

Fundamentally akin to the mystery religions[7] in its notions of salvation, and in its provision of an esoteric knowledge as the means for securing that salvation, it will not need detailed consideration in our study except to note such departures from the mystery religion concepts as are most significant for us, and to indicate its special relation to the Fourth Gospel.

The kinship of Gnosticism with the mystery religions lay in its fundamental interest in the journey of the soul heavenward, in its aristocratic ideas of salvation, in its dualism between the world of matter and of spirit (expressed in the Persian fashion by the categories of light and darkness), in the provision of deliverance from the present order by means of a redemption brought by a messenger from the world of light, and appropriated by man through the performance of magical formulæ, sacraments, or rites of initiation.[8] It differentiated itself from the mystery religions by its more rigorously comprehensive pessimism over the world of matter.

Whereas the mystery religions had appropriated Oriental astrology and had deified the astral bodies, Gnosticism found even the astral world evil, and by a

[5] Bousset, *Die Hauptprobleme der Gnosis.*

[6] Reitzenstein, *Poimandres.*

[7] For likenesses between Gnosticism and the Mystery Religions, cf. Wendland, *Die hellenistisch-römische Kultur in ihren Beziehungen zu Judentum und Christentum,* p. 168.

[8] Pfleiderer, *Primitive Christianity,* III, Ch. XV.

process of demonization [9] had made them a part of the world of darkness from which man was to escape, outposts of the kingdom of evil by which man could pass only with the password which marked him the possessor of the esoteric gnosis. Gnosticism also differentiated itself from the mystery religions on its speculative side.

The mystery religions had assumed a dying and reviving savior-god with whom the initiate was to be identified by the rites of the cult. Gnosticism—while we can affirm no uniform doctrines for all the sects, and must allow for widely diverse views—as a rule assumed a supreme god who was less a personal being than an abstraction, and so remote as to be unknowable.[10] From this supreme god emanated pairs of beings, divine existences of a more mystical than mythical nature, one of whose number, usually Sophia, had fallen to earth. The redemptive process consisted of two parts: the restoration of Sophia to her place in the Pleroma, and the rescue of all other seeds of light in the world of darkness, and was performed by a savior-god who in early Gnosticism was neither an historical nor a mythical figure, but an abstraction, Light, Truth, or "Nous."

The identification in Christian Gnosticism of the savior with Christ,[11] brought Gnosticism into even closer similarity to Hellenistic theology of the redemption religion type, in that this abstraction was then identified with a personality—Christ, while Gnosticism lacked those soberer features of orthodox Christianity,

[9] Bousset finds this one of the evidences for the Persian origin of Gnosticism. *Op. cit.,* pp. 277 ff.; pp. 39 ff.

[10] Norden, *Agnostos Theos,* p. 228.

[11] Cf. Bevan, *Hellenism and Christianity;* Essay, "The Gnostic Redeemer."

which constituted the cleft in thinking between it and the mystery religions.

Gnosticism, to be sure, made its reservations, like the Docetic view, for example, or the view of the Pistis Sophia that Jesus was really distinct from the heavenly Christ, two persons—reservations, which were to preserve the dualism of matter and spirit and to prevent the actual identification of the savior with a person who belonged to the realm of matter. But Christian Gnosticism meant a step in the direction of closer affiliation with the theology of the redemption religions.

In the consideration of the actual content of the gnosis concept in Gnosticism, we are on much the same ground as in the mystery religions. It was knowledge of the rites, the forms, the passwords which enabled the soul to make its journey safely to the heavenly realm. Redemption came actually as a result of divine activity, a gift from the heavenly realm, mediated by a soteriological agent, but man appropriated that saving activity through his "knowledge" of how the upward journey was to be accomplished. It was the secrets of this journey which constituted the "knowledge." [12]

In the Naasene hymn, quoted by Hippolytus,[13] which represents a primitive strain of Gnostic thought,[14] it is the "secrets of the saintly path" which the deliverer brings. The "Hymn of the Robe of Glory" must be as late as the second half of the second

[12] Cf. Reitzenstein's note "γνῶσις und πνεῦμα," *Hellenistiche Mysterien Religionen,* 2nd Edition, 1920, pp. 135 ff.

[13] Hippolytus, *Refutation of all Heresies,* V. 6.

[14] Reitzenstein's analysis in his *Poimandres* detects an early pagan fragment upon which the Christian hymn is built.

century,[15] but is still indicative of the trend which Gnostic thought must have been taking at the time of the writing of the Fourth Gospel. Here the Robe in which the soul was wrapped, which enabled it to make its heavenward journey, was "stirring with the motions of gnosis." [16] The identification of the savior with "Truth," "Life," and "Light," in the Marcosian invocations [17] and in the Pistis Sophia,[18] indicate that the soteriological process was one of illumination—light-sharing—and the invocations reveal that the nature of the knowledge given was esoteric and magical. It is "the name which is hidden" which is to help in the redemptive process. The progression from "mystery" to "mystery" in the Pistis Sophia represents the development of this thought of the function of an esoteric gnosis as redemptive. One secret leads to another and finally the master-mystery is the key to salvation:

"Mary Magdalene started forward and said: 'My Lord, bear with me and be not wroth with me if I question on all things with precision and certainty. Now therefore, my Lord, is then another the word of the mystery of the Ineffable and another the word of the whole gnosis?'

"The Saviour answered and said: 'Yea, another is the mystery of the Ineffable and another is the word of the whole gnosis.'

"And Mary answered again and said unto the Saviour: 'My Lord, bear with me if I question thee and be not wroth with me. Now therefore, my Lord, unless we live and know the gnosis of the whole word of the

[15] Mead, *Fragments of Faith Forgotten*, p. 392.

[16] Mead, *op. cit.*, p. 413.

[17] Quoted in Irenæus' *Refutation*, I, 21.

[18] The *Pistis Sophia* probably dates from the third century, but reflects earlier ideas. *Pistis Sophia*, II, 192; I, 110; I, 60, etc.

Ineffable, shall we not be able to inherit the Light-kingdom?'

"And the Saviour answered and said unto Mary: 'Surely; for every one who shall receive a mystery of the Light-kingdom, will go and will inherit up to the region up to which he hath received mysteries. But he will not know the gnosis of the universe, wherefore all this hath arisen, unless he knoweth the one and only word of the Ineffable which is the gnosis of the universe. And again in openness, I am the Gnosis of the universe. And moreover it is impossible to know the one and only word of the gnosis unless a man first receive the mystery of the Ineffable. But all the men who shall receive mysteries in the Light—every one will go and inherit up to the region up to which he hath received mysteries.' "[19]

The quotation has been given in full in order to show the lengths to which the system was finally carried. The progression from secret to secret puts the whole burden of salvation upon the possession of the gnosis. All the apparatus of the soteriological process has been concentrated in the quite magical effect of the possession of esoteric knowledge. In this extreme form, it is neither ecstasy nor reflection that is wanted. It has become too external and too mechanical to demand either religious fervor or a process of logical thought. It is magical in its effects.

In this bizarre mixture of myth, speculation, and magic brought together from various localities and from varying systems of thought, under the head of Gnosticism, orthodox Christianity found an actual rival. Not until the end of the second century did the controversy between orthodox Christianity and Gnosticism reach its height, but many of the New Testament writings show that by the end of the first

[19] *Pistis Sophia,* II, 96.

century and the beginning of the second, the battle has been called,[20] and that the Christian movement is already conscious that there is necessity for defining its position in relation to Gnosticism. That the Fourth Gospel came into being under the consciousness of that rivalry is clear from many points of view.

Of early theories concerning Gnostic authorship of the Gospel or of controversial motives as the primary urge to the writing, we need not speak here,[21] but it is significant for our purpose to note the conscious opposition of the Fourth Gospel to Gnostic theories of "knowledge," even though we must hold it as a secondary, and perhaps an incidental factor in the aim of the Gospel as a whole.

We emerge here into the realm of controversial interest, aware of itself, and deliberate. The general tone of opposition to Gnosticism in the Fourth Gospel has been pointed out by Dr. Scott,[22] in its steady affirmation of the reality of the earthly life of Jesus, and especially of his passion experience, the absence of any hierarchy of divine emanations, the complete and full acceptance of the Old Testament and the God of the Old Testament, and quite significantly in the avoidance of the characteristic Gnostic vocabulary γνῶσις, πίστις and σοφία. This points to a quite definite polemic on the part of the author against Gnosticism, in spite of his acceptance of certain Gnostic characteristics of thought. He has accepted the categories of Life and Light as designations for the

[20] Rev. ii. 24; Col. ii. 3, 9; I John i. 2, 3, 6; ii. 22; iv. 3; v. 5.

[21] Irenæus III, 2; Epiphanius LI, 3. Cf. A. S. Peake, Art. "Cerinthus," in *E. R. E.*, III, p. 318, and the literature there cited.

[22] Scott, *The Fourth Gospel,* pp. 91 ff.

Savior; the dualism of light and darkness, and the fundamental basis of religious thought which overleaps the barriers of the world of sense and deals directly with the world of supra-sensible realities. Loisy in his new edition of his commentary on the Fourth Gospel says that the author of the Gospel is,

"un maître de la gnose plutôt qu'un apôtre de la foi." [23]

But the relation of the Fourth Gospel to Gnosticism is important for us as it touches the concept "knowledge," and this question we must discuss later, as we return to the Fourth Gospel, as to how it has made use of, or consciously discarded theories with which it came in contact. The result of this study of the "knowledge" concept in Gnosticism may be summed up in the affirmation of its common content with that of the mystery religions.

In spite of the stupendous overlay of speculation around such problems as the origin of the world, the source of evil, and the goal of cosmic processes, Gnosticism, particularly in its earlier forms, had as its fundamental interests those of the mystery religions, and its concept of the function of "knowledge" came to it by the way of the Oriental mystery rather than by the way of Hellenic philosophy. As Dr. Scott has stated it:

"Theories concerning the nature and destiny of the soul were interwoven with the ancient traditions. But while Gnosticism availed itself freely of the language and ideas of philosophy, the appearance which it thus assumed was for the most part deceptive. It was not a speculative, but a mythological system. . . . Its speculative systems were the interpretation of the praxis." [24]

[23] Alfred Loisy, *Le Quatrième Évangile* (2nd edition), 1921, p. 66.

[24] E. F. Scott, Art. "Gnosticism," in *E. R. E.*, VI, pp. 234-5.

The primary interest of Gnosticism was the redemption of the individual soul, and "knowledge" was the divine gift to man, the illumination by which that redemptive process was consummated. Less emotional in its processes, more magical in content than in the mystery religions, it still had as its ultimate basis the concept which was determining for the mystery religion.

In the Christian situation at Ephesus, both formulations were in the immediate field of vision. For the author of the Fourth Gospel "knowledge" as it figured in the mystery religions and in Gnosticism would be a familiar field. But one was knit with the daily experience of the Christian group and was coming closer and closer into affiliation with Christian thought, and finally assimilated itself to the Christian system, as the vehicle for the expression of its mystical and speculative theories.

The closer the ties between any two systems of thought, the sharper will be the reaction in either to that which is distasteful in the other. Hence, the reaction of Christianity to Gnosticism on the whole is more clearly defined than it is to the mystery religions as a whole, and we know that total reaction more intimately than we know the total reaction to the mystery religions.

But as regards the problem of "knowledge" as a factor in religious experience, the Fourth Gospel is reacting to a characteristically Hellenistic concept in both systems, a considerable factor in what Reitzenstein has called "Hellenistic theology," a factor which appears side by side, with only minor individual modifications in the redemption cults and in the eclectic process which produced the heresy of Gnosticism.

With the Fourth Gospel's reaction to that concept we must presently reckon.

(6) *In Hermetic Speculation and the Magical Papyri*

A special form of non-Christian mysticism as it appeared on Egyptian soil presents itself in the Hermetic literature. The relationship of this form of mystical speculation to Christianity has long been a controversial field of study, and complete consensus of opinion has not been reached either as to the date of the Hermetic writings nor as to their influence upon Christian thought.

At one end of the scale was Granger's early position that the *Poimandres* collection is homogeneous and of Christian origin.[1] At the other was Reitzenstein's well known theory that the Hermetic literature was of an early date and was influential in shaping the thought of Philo and the writings of the Christian movement.[2] And between these two many intermediate positions have been expressed.[3]

[1] Frank Granger, *The Poimandres of Hermes Trimegistos, Journal of Theological Studies,* 5, pp. 395 ff.

[2] Reitzenstein, *Poimandres.*

[3] Prof. Reitzenstein's theory which appeared in 1904 assumed that the writings presupposed an Hermetic "community" in existence at the time of the birth of Jesus, and of very early origin. The doctrines were said to represent a combination of Stoic and Egyptian ideas from primitive times. The "Gemeinde," according to the theory, continued until the fourth century A.D. and spread during these centuries to Rome where it absorbed related groups of thinkers, and exerted an appreciable influence upon the thought of the New Testament writers. The theory has not met with wide acceptance except with modifications and abundant literature has brought correction to bear upon it.

Reitzenstein's book was reviewed by Granger in the *Journal of Theological Studies,* VIII, p. 635, in which review

A word as to the nature of these writings before we proceed to the examination of their notions about man's relation to God. By an ancient literary convention in Egypt, the writings of the scribes were attributed to Thot, the patron god of science and

appeared a modification of Granger's earlier view which had been expressed previous to Reitzenstein's work. Here Granger disclaims the homogeneity previously asserted and suggests "Christian influence" instead of complete Christian origin.

A careful examination of the theory is presented in the appendix to Krebs, *Der Logos als Heiland,* in which disagreement with Reitzenstein's theory is expressed, particularly with the early dating. Krebs shows that there is little external evidence for a date earlier than the fourth century. The alleged influence of the literature upon the Shepherd of Hermas, Krebs finds is due to Reitzenstein's disregard of the Old and New Testament imagery in Hermas, and in the use of the *anthropos* doctrine as an indication of early date. He finds that Reitzenstein has taken too little account of the actual nature of the doctrine and its use by Philo. Without the early dating of the *Poimandres,* much of the rest of Reitzenstein's theory must undergo modification—that which has to do with the extent of its influence.

To the present writer a middle position commends itself, *i.e.* that the *Poimandres* represents the expression of a rather long development of religious speculation, whose origin was certainly pre-Christian, but whose literary expression is probably contemporaneous with early Christianity, and perhaps partly anterior to it. The question of the date of this particular expression of Hermetic thought is not for our purposes a pressing one. No expression of religious ideas springs full-armed into being. Such remains as we have, indicate a school of thought of considerable duration, and acquaintance with the literature by the author of the Fourth Gospel is not necessary to his general familiarity with the principles which it represents. In so cosmopolitan a city as Ephesus, in so syncretistic an age as the one in which the Fourth Gospel was written, general acquaintance with contemporaneous systems of religious thought may without undue boldness be assumed.

literature, a convention to which reference is made by Plato.[4] This Egyptian god Thot is sometimes identified by early writers with the Greek Hermes [5] and sometimes is represented as his son,[6] but the two are closely enough identified so that for all practical purposes the equation between them is correct. Hermes is represented in the Hermetic corpus as accepting the ideas of Thot. The largest and most significant group of writings which remain from the Hermetic group is a collection which bears the name *Poimandres,* a set of some eighteen pieces, dealing with the nature of God, of the world and of the soul, in which the redemption motif plays an important part.

The new birth to a life which is characterized by the life of God in the individual is the goal of man's life as revealed in the conversation between Hermes and his son Thot.[7] The essence of this new life is gnosis, knowledge of God. Both Kroll [8] and Reitzenstein [9] have clearly demonstrated that the noun γνῶσις, which ordinarily demands an objective genitive, has come to be employed in so technical a sense in the *Poimandres* that the object needs no longer to be expressed. And what is the character of the gnosis in the *Poimandres?*

Gnosis is equated with the state of oneness with God, and is the equivalent of salvation.

[4] *Phædr,* 274 C; and *Philebus,* 18 B.

[5] Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.,* III, 56.

[6] *Poimandres,* Reitzenstein's text, p. 339. Cf. *Hermes Trimegistos,* by St. George Stock, *E.R.E.,* VI, p. 626.

[7] Reitzenstein, *Poimandres,* p. 339.

[8] Kroll, *Die Lehren des Hermes Trismegistos Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie der Mittelalters,* 1914, p. 353.

[9] Reitzenstein, *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen,* p. 113.

"This is the good end for those who have gained gnosis —to be made one with God." [10]

"Be not then carried off by the fierce flood, but using the shore current, ye who can, make Salvation's port, and harboring there, see ye for one to take you by the hand and lead you unto Gnosis's gates." [11]

"This is the sole salvation for a man, God's Gnosis. This is the way up to the Mount." [12]

The greatest evil in life is ignorance of God, as we learn from the title of the little sermon in the Hermetic Corpus.[13]

The method or process by which man received the gnosis was a vision experience, a rebirth, as Hermes explained to his son Thot:

"What may I say, my Son? I can but tell thee this. Whene'er I see within myself the simple vision (ἁπλαστον) brought to birth out of God's mercy, I have passed through myself into a body that can never die. And now I am not what I was before but I am born in Mind." [14]

It comes by the road of illumination:

"O blessed Gnosis, by thee illumined, hymning through thee, the Light that mind alone can see, I joy in Joy of the mind." [15]

It comes as a gift, as a result of ecstatic vision, rather than of the operation of man's reason or understanding:

"It chanced upon a time my mind was meditating on the things that are, my thought was raised to a great

[10] *Poimandres,* 26; Mead, *Thrice Greatest Hermes,* p. 16.
[11] *Cor. Herm.,* VII, 2.
[12] X, 15. [13] VII. [14] XIII, 3. [15] XIII, 18; also I, 32.

height, the senses of my body being held back—just as men are who are weighed down with sleep after a fill of food, or from fatigue of the body."[16]

The condition of the ecstasy cannot be described merely by saying that the bodily senses are in abeyance. Like all mystical experience it defies description in terms of the ordinary life of man. With swift strokes that extraordinary condition is figured forth:

"Make then thyself to grow to the same stature as the Greatness which transcends all measure; leap forth from every body; transcend all Time; become Eternity; and (thus) shalt thou know God. Conceiving nothing is impossible unto thyself; think thyself deathless and able to know all—all arts, all sciences, the way of every life.

"Become more lofty than all height, and lower than all depth. Collect into thyself all senses of all creatures —of fire (and) water, dry and moist. That thou art at the same time in every place—in earth, in sea, in sky; not yet begotten, in the womb, young, old, dead, in after-death conditions. And if thou knowest all these things at once,[17] times, places, doings, qualities, and quantities, thou canst know God."[18]

This is the language of ecstasy pure and simple, the attempt to transcend all known experience in relating that which has carried one beyond the bounds of reflective or rational processes. It defies description; it must be experienced to be appreciated, but such appeal as can be made by the one who has experienced it, to those who desire it, must be made by the avenue of feeling, for feeling, and not reason, has been the avenue through which it came to him.

[16] I, 1.

[17] Alternate rendering by Mead: "art similarly conscious of."

[18] XI, 20.

The function of gnosis is salvation, its processes are ecstatic, and its end is nothing short of deification itself; participation in the divine nature, as we have seen—"being made one with God.[19] And the closing prayer of the *Poimandres* reveals that the one who receives it thinks of himself as a channel through which gnosis may be mediated to others who have not yet received it:

"Give ear to me who pray that I may ne'er of gnosis fail . . . and fill me with thy power and with this Grace (of thine) that I may give the light to those in ignorance."[20]

But of the actual content and function of gnosis in this Hermetic mysticism, no better exposition can be found than that of the λόγος τέλειος of the *Papyrus Mimaut* whose text Reitzenstein has reconstructed. It is worthy of being quoted at length because of its direct bearing upon the problem before us:

"We render thee thanks, Most High, for by thy grace we have received this light of knowledge (gnosis) namely the unutterable name honored by the appellation, God, and blessed by the invocation, Father. For to all men and women thou hast exhibited a fatherly good-will and affection and friendship and most sweet influence. For thou hast graciously bestowed upon us, mind, reason, knowledge (νοῦν, λόγον, γνῶσιν) mind that we may know thee, reason that we may take account of thee, knowledge that having discerned thee, we may rejoice. Having been saved by thee, we rejoice, for thou hast made us to be, while in our bodies, partakers in the divine nature, through the vision of thyself. Thanks of man be to thee for our knowledge of thy greatness. We have known thee, O light discernible by intelligence alone: we

[19] *Supra*, p. 83. [20] *Poimandres*, No. 32.

have known thee, O life of man's life: we have known thee, O fertile womb of all things. Having worshiped thee, we have asked no boon of thy goodness except this —be pleased to preserve us in the knowledge of thyself, be entreated that we should not be turned away from this way of life."[21]

The central position of gnosis in the Hermetic scheme of religious thought is clear in this prayer; its function in making man a partaker in the divine life, its processes as a divine gift of illumination to man, its effects as discernible in human life. As in the vision of Apuleius, the suggestion of permanence is given. The recipient walks in a different "way of life" because he has received it. Closer at this point to the Johannine concept than many of the Hellenistic expressions of religious experience, the prayer makes gnosis the direct road to the participation in the life of God.

In this connection, a word should be said concerning the magical papyri from Egypt which reveal the spells and formulas used by professional sorcerers from the third century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. Their range in subject matter is great, from recipes for the compounding of drugs and the making of ink, to formulas for producing love or hate, and for healing disease and raising from the dead.[22] In these manuals, the term "gnosis" often appears, and is regularly associated with the notion "power," that for which the magicians are seeking. One magician thanks God that he is:

[21] Reitzenstein, *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen,* 2nd Edit. 1920, pp. 136-137, translation from Morgan, *The Religion and Theology of Paul,* p. 136.

[22] Glasse, *The Mysteries and Christianity,* Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1921, p. 59.

"now in possession of a nature that is Godlike, because he has been in contact with God."

Another prayer for Power reads:

"I am he to whom . . . thou didst grant the gnosis of thy mighty name, which I shall keep secret, sharing it with no one."

As is natural in this context, the emphasis falls upon the secret nature of the knowledge received, though religious notions seem not wholly to be lost in the thought of the magical effects of the gnosis.

Whatever the content of the Hermetic gnosis, whether of this simple variety which is magical in effect and has to do with the commonplace affairs of everyday life, or of the more mystical, religious character in the higher ranges of experience—as exemplified by the prayer of the λόγος τέλειος, where the soul finds immediate participation in the life of God—the processes are not those of contemplation or reflection, but those of illumination, feeling, and, in the extreme form, the way of actual ecstasy. This is the atmosphere of the redemption religion. The soul is to be rescued and made a participant in the divine life. It is the home of emotion and the language of the redemption cult. Its gnosis is at home with the gnosis of the mystery religion.

Other affinities with the mystery religions which the Hermetic literature exhibits might be mentioned, its use of astral speculation, its thought of man as the child of planetary spirits, its dualism in the thought of God and the world of matter, its central redemption motif; but these are not our first concern. In the matter which lies directly before us, the conclusion is clear enough.

Knowledge of God for the Hermetic speculation is a condition of religious emotion, exaltation at the moment, and in the highest expression, of permanent exaltation of life. It comes to man through the gateway of feeling rather than through that of reflection, and its function is redemptive. It is similar in content and in process to the gnosis of the mystery religions.

For the most part, the Hermetic mysticism remains upon a level which we have seen was reached by only the higher ranges of expression in the mystery cults. It is far more at home with the vision of Apuleius than with the concepts of the Dionysus cult. In its genuinely religious conception of the possibility of man's sharing in the divine life, in its affirmation of permanence in that participation, in its thought of man's life as a channel for the divine gnosis to be mediated to those who have not had the vision, it lives upon the higher levels of mystical experience. But with this recognition, our conclusion remains, that in fundamental conceptions, it is akin to the mysticism of the mystery religions.

(7) *In the Odes of Solomon*

Suggestions have been made that the expression of religious mysticism, which lies closest in contemporary thought to the Johannine, is that in the little pseudonymous collection of hymns known as the *Odes of Solomon,* and that perhaps some genetic relationship exists between the two.[1] This collection of hymns was found some fifteen years ago by Dr. Rendel Harris in a Syriac manuscript of the sixteenth century, to-

[1] Scott, "The Hellenistic Mysticism of the Fourth Gospel," *Am. Jour. of Theol.,* XX, p. 355.

gether with the *Psalms of Solomon.* Many of the hymns seem to be of Christian origin, and their use in the *Pistis Sophia* and in the work of Lactantius prove both their early date and the fact that they were known in Christian circles. Harnack thinks of them as Jewish in origin, but embellished by a Christian hand, with only two of them genuinely Christian productions.[2]

Some have found, particularly in the sixth Ode, traces of Gnostic thinking; but Dr. Harris,[3] following Ryle and James,[4] maintains that there is nothing distinctly Gnostic about this hymn, and no decisive word has yet been spoken about their date and origin. The truth is that they reveal too little of their theological and philosophical background for us to be sure of their origin, and are varied enough in their religious outlook to make generalization unsafe.

Whether they are actually Christian, or Jewish thought presented in Christian dress, it is certain that the prevailing mood which they now express is one of buoyant Christian hope, presented as the result of personal religious experience which would be congenial with a Christian outlook on life. Indeed they bear so close a resemblance to Johannine expression that Ryle and James have hinted at actual dependence, particularly in Ode 6, upon Johannine ideas. It would hardly seem, however, that the resemblances were sufficiently sustained throughout the poem to warrant a judgment of Johannine ancestry.[5]

Whatever the final judgment upon the problem of

[2] Harnack, *Ein Jüdisch-Christliches Psalmbuch aus dem ersten Jahrhundert,* 1910, Leipzig.

[3] Rendel Harris, the *Odes of Solomon,* p. 13.

[4] Ryle and James, the *Psalms of Solomon,* p. 160.

[5] Harris, *op. cit.,* p. 96.

dependence, we cannot deny that we have here in this little hymn book much that is common to the mysticism of the Fourth Gospel, the warm personal religious hope, the intense fervor of devotion, the emphasis upon Truth and Love; the imagery which is used to describe a mystical union with deity, figures which represent the divine life in the believer as Light, flooding his being,[6] as milk or water nourishing his life,[7] as a door opening upon life.[8] The atmosphere of the poems is far from being alien to that of the Gospel.

But what of the function of "knowledge" in the religious experience which is here portrayed? Fellowship with God is several times represented as being based upon knowledge. Sometimes that knowledge is represented as an attribute of God himself:

> "The Father of Knowledge is the word of knowledge;
> He who created me when yet I was not, knew what
> I should do when I came into being."[9]

But it is also designated as an attribute of the believer:

> "I was established on the rock of Truth, and even to the end I received his knowledge."[10]

And here it is significant that a parallel expression for the experience of receiving "knowledge" is "drinking the living water." The relationship between God and man is several times depicted in terms of knowledge:

> "He hath appointed to knowledge its way.
> He hath filled me with the words of truth.
> He hath caused his knowledge to abound in me."[11]

> "Ignorance hath been destroyed because the knowledge
> of God hath arrived.

[6] Odes 11 and 15.
[7] Odes 8, 19, 30.
[8] Ode 17.
[9] Ode 7.
[10] Ode 11.
[11] Ode 15.

There shall be none that breathes without knowledge." [12]

But two passages reveal with such fullness the place that knowledge takes in the mystic's experience of God that it will be worth while to quote them at length:

"As the sun is the joy to them that seek for its daybreak, so is my joy in the Lord; because He is my Sun and His rays have lifted me up; and His light hath dispelled all darkness from my face. In Him I have acquired eyes, and have seen His holy day: ears have become mine, and I have heard His truth. The thought of knowledge hath been mine and I have been delighted by means of it. The way of error I have left, and have walked towards Him, and have received salvation from Him, without grudging. And according to His bounty He hath given me, and according to His excellent beauty, He hath made me. I have put on incorruption through His name: and have put off corruption through His grace. Death hath been destroyed before my face, and Sheol hath been abolished by my word, and there hath gone up deathless life in the Lord's land, and it hath been made known by his faithful ones and been given without stint to all those that trust in Him. Hallelujah." [13]

"I am a priest of the Lord and to Him I do priestly service, and to Him I offer the sacrifice of His thought. For His thought is not like the thought of the world nor the thought of the flesh, nor like them that work carnally. The sacrifice of the Lord is righteousness, and purity of heart and lips." [14]

Here are the familiar Johannine conceptions. Communion with God is like light upon the believer. Darkness is sharply opposed to it. Death is not a physical fact, but a spiritual condition, and communion

[12] Ode 7. [13] Ode 15. [14] Ode 20.

with God, which is "deathless life," is its antithesis. "Knowledge" has its part in this great awakening to life. Knowledge is the possession of the believer and in it he has delight. In the second of the two quotations, the figure of priesthood is used, but the writer explains that this is not to him a ritualistic service, but consists in "thinking God's thoughts." It moves in the realm of the Fourth Gospel thought, where knowing God is life eternal and where it is the truth that makes men free.

The difficulties in the way of a comparison of this little hymn book with the Fourth Gospel are obvious. With the latter, we have a sustained consecutive piece of writing; with the former, a few lyrical bits which do not pretend to give a comprehensive view of religious experience. One is confessedly a Christian formulation with an apologetic purpose; the other gives such disparate views of religion that we are at a loss to classify it. The most that we may hazard is that the poet or group of poets behind the *Odes of Solomon* lived in a world of thought that was congenial with that of the author of the Fourth Gospel, whether there was formal affiliation between them or not.

The fragmentary glimpses of the place of "knowledge" in this mysticism do not afford us sufficient data for any sure analysis of its relations. The general tenor of the thought, however, leads to the conclusion that the content of the term is emotional rather than intellectual. Praise is the cardinal attitude on the part of the mystic, and "thinking the thoughts of God" results in "flourishing in truth in the praise of His holiness."

The figures which portray the union with God are typically those of the emotional mystic. The poet feels himself a harp, over whose strings the Spirit of

the Lord moves.[15] He goes up to the Light as if to a chariot.[16] Fellowship with God is distilled as dew, or rests upon him as a cloud.[17] Praise gushes forth as water from a fountain or as honey from the comb.[18] God is represented as speaking directly to him and crying,

"Give me your soul, that I may give you my soul."[19]

The fellowship is described in terms of the most intimate and tender relationship:

"I should not have known how to love the Lord if he had not loved me. For who is able to distinguish love, except the one that is loved? I love the Beloved, and my soul loves Him, and where His rest is, there also am I; and I shall be no stranger, for with the Lord Most High and Merciful, there is no grudging. I have been united to Him."[20]

"Knowledge," as we have seen, is repeatedly cited as a factor in this mystical experience, but of its content or of the process of securing it, we have too little data to warrant a generalization. The general context of ideas would suggest a rather diffuse emotional experience in which the feeling of communion with God is practically synonymous with the "knowledge" concept.

Fascinating as is the problem of the relationship between these two formulations of religious experience, it cannot now be pressed further. It is possible for us only to recognize that another poet, or group of poets, of congenial temper with the author of the Fourth Gospel had given lyrical expression (or were perhaps so doing contemporaneously with his writing) to their notions of religious experience. Had they

[15] Ode 6. [16] Ode 38. [17] Ode 35. [18] Ode 40. [19] Ode 9. [20] Ode 3.

attempted a fuller exposition of the content of that experience, would they have still maintained congeniality with his view? The most that we can say, is that as far as they went, their views were certainly not alien to the views of the Gospel.

Problems of actual dependence between the two expressions are not essential to our purpose. It is enough that ideas were current in circles of Jewish background of a mysticism that was truly Hellenistic in character. As Dr. Scott has said:

"If they (the Odes) were anterior to the Gospel, they may possibly afford at least a partial key to its genesis. . . . But a hypothesis of this kind is difficult to maintain in view of the evident relation of the Gospel to Gentile Christianity; and would only carry the problem a stage farther back, even if it could be established. For in any case, the mystical feeling which pervades the 'Odes' cannot have been native to Judaism. Their Jewish origin would prove nothing more than that the Hellenistic ideas had blended themselves in some measure even with Palestinian thought."[21]

And so we are left with the consciousness of a fascinating problem, still unsolved, and not likely to be solved with the data now at our command. The Fourth Gospel mysticism is at home with the mysticism of the Odes, but it is not identical with it. The plus side of the relationship is with the Fourth Gospel, and the plus comprises among its elements a fuller content in its gnosis concept. Of that "plus" we shall later have more to say.

(8) *In Pauline Christianity*

The attempt to see any aspect of the thought of the Fourth Gospel in relation to its environment, as reac-

[21] Amer. Jour. of Theol., XX, p. 356.

tion either favorable to or critical of the world of thought which called it forth, must find its culmination in the study of the Pauline concept. Scholarship has been accustomed to viewing the theology of the Fourth Gospel as a greater Paulinization of Paulinism: Paul's thought of the Christian life as the experience of the indwelling Christ, men have seen carried to its fullest realization in the mystical union of the believer with Christ in the Fourth Gospel; Paul's antithesis of πνεῦμα and σάρξ carried over into the dualism represented by the children of light and the children of darkness in John; Paul's thought of the sacramental nature of baptism and the Lord's supper intensified by the Fourth Gospel to show their eternal and spiritual significance; Paul's liberality in breaking the bonds of Judaism universalized in the Johannine representation of Jesus drawing all men unto himself; Paul's implicit acceptance of the new birth in his teaching about the "new man" taken up into the explicit new birth concept of John iii; Paul's conception of the resurrection of Jesus as the pledge of resurrection for the individual given a more far-reaching significance and made more continuously meaningful in the abiding presence of Jesus in the hearts of believers. Paul's gospel has been seen raised to a higher power in the Johannine presentation of Christianity.

It is now our task to examine the concept of "knowledge of God" as it appears in Paulinism, to see whether this traditional view is sustained, but more imperatively, to see what light is thrown upon the position taken in the Fourth Gospel by its relation to the concept as it appears in Paul. But the concept finds its explanation only in relation to the larger structure of ideas, and there is little hope of understanding it in isolation.

Much has been written upon the subject of the relationship of Paul to the world of Hellenistic thinking, and in particular upon his relation to the mystery religions.[1] It is not within our province to go into that intricate discussion which has already been fully and ably handled by such scholars as Loisy,[2] Kennedy,[3] Morgan,[4] Schweitzer,[5] Reitzenstein,[6] and Lake.[7]

In the differing views represented in critical opinion by this list of writers, this much of agreement may be said to exist: that Christian thought did undergo a change through the teaching of Paul; that in form, at least, the adaptations which Christianity suffered under the hand of the great Apostle brought it closer to Hellenistic religion; in other words, that the language medium which was characteristic of the mystery religions was adopted by Paul to commend the Christian message to the Hellenistic world.

From here on opinions differ. Kennedy's painstaking discussion of Reitzenstein's philological researches adduces evidence to show that the mystery terminology employed by Paul is only a vehicle for thought which has closer affinities with Jewish religion than it has with the mystery cults. Loisy, on the other hand, considers that Christianity, existing first as a national religion with a salvation notion as its center, was transformed under the hand of Paul into a real mys-

[1] For a full discussion of the history of Pauline criticism, cf. Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters.*

[2] Loisy, *Les Mystères païens et le Mystère chrêtien.*

[3] Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions.*

[4] Morgan, *The Religion and Theology of Paul.*

[5] Schweitzer, *op. cit.*

[6] Reitzenstein, *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen.*

[7] Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of Paul.*

tery[8] with a theology, a sacramental system, and a promise of individual resurrection, in close correspondence with the mystery cults. Lake has assumed that the Gentile converts would so regard his teaching:

"In the teaching of St. Paul as to the meaning of the death of Jesus, he saw every reason for equating the Lord with the Redeemer God of the mystery religions, with the advantage that this Redeemer possessed an historic character which could scarcely be claimed for Attis or Mithras. Similarly in Baptism and the Eucharist, he found 'mysteries' which could immediately be equated with other 'mysteries,' offering eternal life to those who partook of them. In other words, many of the Greeks must have regarded Christianity as a superior form of 'Mystery Religion'"[9]

Now the difficulty for us lies here; as we have just recognized, there is no hope for the understanding of the gnosis concept apart from its general context of religious ideas. On the other hand, it is exactly through the study of such individual concepts as this, that we emerge with some true understanding of the general context of Paul's thought. In other words, if we knew in general how closely Paul's view of Christianity had shaped itself to the pattern of Hellenistic thought, we should (with limitations, of course) be ready to hazard an *a priori* estimate as to how he would be likely to handle the concept "knowledge," and without the larger context, we cannot hope to understand the term.

But on the other hand, we need the examination of just such single concepts as γνῶσις, μυστήριον, πνεῦμα, νοῦς, etc., that we may arrive at any opinion as to how close the relationship is between the Hellenistic

[8] Loisy, *op. cit.*, Ch. VIII, 232 ff. [9] Lake, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

"mystery" and Pauline Christianity. We need not, however, be completely baffled by the dilemma. As we have said, a certain amount of agreement in critical opinion already exists. Suspending for the time any judgment upon the question in its entirety, we may accept as a working basis certain positions which have received a fairly general acceptance, and proceed inductively therefrom to the examination of the gnosis concept.

We may assume that primitive Christianity took shape as an enthusiastic social movement, organized about Jesus's teaching of the Kingdom as a social ideal, the reign of God on earth, with standards for the individual which resulted from the Kingdom-teaching which was central. Placed as it was in a Palestinian community, where eschatological hopes had centered about a Messiah, those eschatological hopes, at the death of Jesus, assumed concrete salvation notions with relation to his second coming.

He was the fulfillment of the highest hopes of Judaism, and at his return all those promises of the reign of God on earth would find their fullest realization. Devotion to the personality of Jesus gave dynamic to the enthusiasm for his teaching, and projected itself into a community organization of which expectancy was the very key-note.

The rites of the primitive community were simple; baptism as a purification rite and as symbol of repentance had come as an inheritance from John the Baptist. Participation in the common meal was accepted not as a formal sacrament, but as a symbol of brotherhood and foretaste of the kingdom which they expected so soon.[10] The institutions were an inheritance

[10] E. F. Scott, *The Beginnings of the Church,* Lectures VII and VIII.

from Judaism. The scriptures, the synagogue, were accepted as the basis of the institutional life of the community. Its ethics were of the "interim" sort, calculated only for the interval which they held to be short, until the intervention of the Kingdom.

Upon this background was projected the work of the great Apostle, who, himself a product of both Judaism and the culture of the Græco-Roman world, set forward the process which we know as the Hellenization of Christianity. It must not be forgotten that Paul was not the initiator of this process. The Hellenization of Judaism had begun with the conquest of the East by Alexander. All the forces of a great world-syncretizing process were already let loose, and Christianity, as a social movement, could never have withstood it if it were to survive at all.

Of the two decades between the ministry of Jesus and the Gentile mission of Paul, we know all too little, but such evidence as we have indicates the beginnings of contacts that must inevitably lead to a Hellenization of the Christian movement itself.[11]

But, geographically speaking, it was the activity of Paul which brought the Christian movement into direct relation with the religious thought of the Hellenistic world, and it was under the impress of his teaching that its actual content began to take on the dress of Hellenistic religion. In an admirable article entitled "Paul and Hellenism," [12] R. Knopf has suggested as axiomatic the following points in which Paul's adaptation of Christianity for the Gentile world reveals the ways of Hellenistic thinking: the antithesis between flesh and spirit, and the closely related

[11] Acts i.-viii.; xi. 19 ff; x. 8-26.

[12] Knopf, "Paul and Hellenism," *Amer. Jour. of Theol.*, 1914, XVIII, pp. 497 ff.

bias toward asceticism; the notion of supra-mundane powers, great spirits of heaven (κοσμοκράτορες) who hold man within their power and from whose dominion he is to be freed; the conception of "mystery"; and the activity of a savior-god.[13]

In the two fundamental positions of his religious theory, Knopf, with Loisy, Reitzenstein, and others already mentioned, finds Paul in agreement with Hellenistic thought, in his mystical doctrine of redemption—his Christ-mysticism which he describes as being ἐν Χριστῷ—and in his conception of the sacramental nature of baptism and the Lord's supper. But this is the point at which the ways divide.

Schweitzer, Kennedy, and Clemen are convinced that the differences outweigh the likenesses, and that these are the very concepts which hold Pauline Christianity aloof from the mystery religions. We cannot here press that main question further, but should proceed to the examination of the concept "knowledge" as it figures in the scheme of religious thought expressed by the Apostle.

That which first appears in our consideration of the concept in Pauline Christianity is that it does not hold a uniform connotation throughout the letters. "The word of knowledge" put alongside the "word of wisdom" in I Corinthians viii, as a gift of the Spirit, its use in the same letter at xiv. 6 as a designation of one of the qualities which would give weight to the practice of the glossalalia, would suggest a very general meaning for the term, the perceptive, or intelligent faculty in human consciousness.[14]

Occasionally it is applied to the wisdom which God himself possesses, as infinite and unsearchable, a

[13] *Op. cit.*, p. 513.

[14] Cf. also Rom. ii. 20; II Cor. vi. 6; Eph. iv. 13.

thought which is clearly rooted in the Judaistic concept of the Wisdom of God.[15] But we come close to the characteristic usage of the term in Paul, in the I Cor. xiv passage, in the relationship that is suggested between γνῶσις, "knowledge," and ἀποκάλυψις "revelation:"

"But now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation, or of knowledge?"

And again this collocation of ideas appears in Ephesians i. 17,[16] where the prayer is that God may give the "spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge (ἐπιγνώσει) of him;" so that their hearts may be enlightened, that they may *know* what is the hope of his calling. This is the illumination which is the gift of the Spirit, the divine χάρισμα which is coincident with the "putting on of the new man in Christ Jesus." The figure of illumination is most forcefully put in II Corinthians iv. 6:

"Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Knowledge is listed as one of the gifts of the Spirit, along with speaking with tongues, and the gift of

[15] Cf. Sanday, *Romans in I. C. C.*, p. 340.

[16] References to the Ephesian letter are offered with the recognition that, by all readers, they will not be accepted as first-hand Pauline expression. For the present writer the problem of the genuineness of the Ephesian letter remains an open question in which the balance of the evidence seems prejudicial to Pauline authorship.

prophecy,[17] but is made subordinate to love in the human relationship, and is designated as surpassed by love in the divine relationship:

"If I know all mysteries and all knowledge . . . but have not love, I am nothing."[18]

"To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."[19]

Nevertheless, this gnosis is represented as lying close to the heart of religious experience,[20] and it is at least a part of the goal toward which the Christian sets his face:

"Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."[21]

Twice it figures in the little definition of religious experience which introduces his letter to the Colossians:

"For this cause we also since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray and make request for you, that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all spiritual wisdom and understanding to walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasure, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."[22]

The "knowledge" which is divine is sharply contrasted with the knowledge which is of this world,[23] and even within the Christian group he holds that some have accepted an inferior knowledge, in their interest in angels, and are a source of contamination

[17] I Cor. xiii. 1. [19] Eph. iii. 19. [21] Eph. iv. 13.
[18] I Cor. xiii. 2. [20] Eph. i. 17. [22] Col. i. 9.
[23] Col. ii. 8; I Cor. ii. 10 ff.; II Cor. x. 5.

to others.[24] Even the knowledge which is of the Spirit knows certain gradation.

There is the wisdom that is for the "full-grown," [25] revealed through the Spirit (and the word employed is τελείοις, the same as that applied in the mysteries to those who are full initiates), which "searcheth the deep things of God." [26] But there is the knowledge that is simpler, "the milk" which one takes before he is ready for the "meat." [27] The ironical reply to the Corinthian question about meat sacrificed to idols [28] suggests these gradations. There is a kind of "knowledge" that "puffeth up," but that pride is an indication that,

"he knoweth not yet as he ought to know."

The true "knowledge" of God has its roots in love,[29] and the consummation of these gradations will be reached when the Christian shall know God fully, even as he is now fully known by God.[30]

It is here that we are led directly into the question of the content of this gnosis in the Pauline scheme of thought. Morgan [31] believes that it covers speculative theology and eschatology, and merges into practical moral insight. Eschatology is surely suggested in the wisdom of which he speaks in I Corinthians ii. 9, and its connection with ethics or moral insight is repeatedly affirmed,[32] but the heart of this knowledge is the Gospel of Christ crucified, whose spirit is indwelling in man. It is appreciation of the factors which make

[24] Col. ii. 18. [26] I Cor. ii. 10. [28] I Cor. viii. 1.
[25] I Cor. ii. 6. [27] I Cor. iii. 2. [29] I Cor. viii. 3.
[30] I Cor. xiii. 12.
[31] Morgan, *The Religion and Theology of Paul*, p. 166 ff.
[32] I Cor. i. 9; viii. 1-13.

up the redemptive process for man. Paul claimed that his whole Gospel came to him directly by revelation,[33] and we have but now noted the close association of "knowledge" with the term "revelation." That Gospel, he said, consisted of two parts: "His Son in me" and the conviction that a personal mission was entailed for him:

"That I might preach him among the Gentiles."

Later he sums up the whole Gospel as follows:

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."[34]

And most significantly for us, he brings the content of the "knowledge" directly before us:

"Yea, verily I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the *knowledge* of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse that I may gain Christ . . . that I may *know* him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings."[35]

The content of the revelation, then, is Christ crucified, but risen and giving resurrection to all men. Hints that it is more than this appear. It is a personal relationship with God. Nowhere is this more clearly shown than in the passages where the Apostle corrects himself. To know God is rather to be known by him:

"Howbeit at that time, not knowing God, ye were in bondage to them that by nature are no gods: but now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be

[33] Gal. i. 11. [34] Rom. x. 9. [35] Phil. iii. 8-10.

known by God, how turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments?" [36]

And again in I Corinthians viii.3 the same relationship is suggested:

"If any man loveth God, the same is known by him."

And, as we have already seen, the consummation of knowledge is to know God even as God already fully knows the individual.[37] That gnosis is not merely recognition of the facts which constitute the redemptive process, but partakes of the nature of a personal relationship, seems here implied, but here we move into the realm of the *unio mystica* of Paul which is more characteristically expressed by the term ἐν Χριστῷ.[38]

For Paul, gnosis was always in a secondary position because faith was the center of his theology, and faith merged imperceptibly into the state of mystical union with Christ. He can touch first one and then the other, with hardly a shade of difference in meaning:

"I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live and yet no longer I but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." [39]

[36] Gal. iv. 8-9. [37] I Cor. xiii. 12.

[38] This interpretation is taken by Kennedy, but is rejected by Burton Scott Easton in an article "The Pauline Theology and Hellenism," in the *Amer. Jour. of Theol.*, XXI, 1917, pp. 358 ff. Mr. Easton takes the verb "to know" in the Old Testament sense of "regard with favor," citing Amos iii. 2, Ps. i. 6 and cxliv. 3. In the judgment of the present writer, Mr. Easton's interpretation does not give sufficient weight to the social or collective connotation of the term in the Old Testament passages cited.

[39] Gal. ii. 20.

Nowhere does he elucidate the relationship existing in his mind among these terms πνεῦμα, γνῶσις, πίστις and ἐν Χριστῷ, but their close connection is steadily implied. Faith is presented as the sole condition of salvation,[40] but the actual conditions of life in which faith expresses itself constitute the state of mystical union with Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ). Γνῶσις figures as part of that steady relationship (for the Christ-mysticism is everywhere recognized as equivalent to God-mysticism)[41] and is both the intellectual appreciation of the meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ and the active personal fellowship which faith implies. Both πίστις and γνῶσις are of supernatural origin, gifts of the Spirit, and all the terms are thus drawn together in a relationship so close that it is almost impossible to extricate them, one from another.

The content, then, of the gnosis is characteristically, realization of the process which constitutes redemption for man, the death and resurrection of Jesus, but it is this with a plus, a plus which, as Morgan has indicated,[42] leads on the one hand, to ethical insight, and on the other, to the permanent mystical relationship with God, more usually expressed under the category of "being in Christ."

But a word should be said of the steps which lead to the acceptance of the gnosis by man. Always the assumption is that it is a supernatural gift, but on man's side, what steps are to be taken to appropriate that gift? No rules are prescribed, but a state of ecstasy is steadily implied, and the tone of Paul's urgency in writing to his converts of this most central

[40] Gal. iii. and Rom. iv.
[41] Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
[42] Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

fact in Christian experience is one of emotional intensity and eagerness.

His own experience Paul describes as an appearance of Jesus "as to one untimely born," [43] and the ecstasy is more fully characterized in II Corinthians xii:

> "Whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not. God knoweth. Such a one caught up even to the third heaven . . . how that he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

And Paul nowhere goes into greater detail than this in his teaching to his converts as to how the gnosis should be acquired by man. His almost complete indifference to the facts of Jesus's life and the content of his teaching, with the high stress on the facts of his death and resurrection show that no reflective process upon the personality and ethical teaching of Jesus is, in his mind, asked for. It is the grace of God which gives the vision.[44]

It is the vision of the gnosis which makes the man πνευματικός, but the vision comes not as the result of man's effort in the ethical realm, nor as the result of his achievement in the field of reason or reflection. It is to the end a supernatural gift accompanied by emotional states, which in his own case at least can only be described in terms of ecstasy.

Modern psychology recognizes many factors in Paul's experience preceding the Damascus road cataclysm which functioned to produce it—high tension, as a result of long inner conflict centering about the sense of guilt occasioned by his relation to a tyrannical ancient law; reflection upon "the new Way" and its

[43] I Cor. xv. 8. [44] I Cor. xv. 10.

power to produce such radiant living and such gallant dying as he had witnessed in his contact with Stephen; intellectual appreciation of the failure of legalism as a guide for life, and an inward struggle against what was dear in tradition and in inheritance.

But however much modern psychology does to explain the process today, for Paul no such analysis existed. To him it was vision under the category of supernaturalism, and ecstasy was the state in which it came. To his converts, he gave it thus, and he asked from them no more than he himself had received. The vision with its gnosis came first; upon it he reared a superstructure of argument about his great themes—pre-destination, justification, glorification; but reflection upon these was not to him the pre-requisite for the supernatural gift. Gnosis remained to the end for Paul a gift of the Spirit, which man receives by the grace of God, whose gateway into human experience was the gateway of ecstatic conversion.

To the present writer, the kinship between Paul's conception of gnosis and that of the Hellenistic religions of redemption is unmistakable, a kinship that is deeper than that of mere terminology. Reitzenstein has demonstrated from the philological point of view the relationship between γνῶσις and πνεῦμα in the mystery religion cycle of ideas. But we can carry the relationship over into the Pauline scheme. The gnosis of which Paul speaks is, like the gnosis of the mystery religions, a divine gift which makes the man πνευματικός. As Reitzenstein affirms, it is never merely equivalent to "rational knowledge." It makes a man capable of being ἐν Χριστῷ and is necessary to the redemptive process. Both the gnosis of the mystery religions and the gnosis of Paul have

as their content the process which constitutes redemption for man.

Both find their operation best described under the figure of illumination. Both imply the state of ecstasy in their reception by man. Both suggest grades of gnosis, of simple character for the inexperienced, and of deeper significance for the seasoned adherent of the faith. Both are rooted in a dualistic world-view, and think of the gnosis as a factor in the new birth which redeems man from the world of sin and death.

By no means does this comparison wish to suggest that the gnosis of Paul is identical with that of the mystery religions. Its rooting in historical fact, instead of myth, its inseparable connection in Paul's mind with the ethical values in life, its dignity in the treatment of the spiritual life, would distinguish Paul's conception of gnosis at once from the characteristic view of the mystery religions. But more than this, the great force of a vital personality has been thrown into it, carrying with it the dignity, the sobriety, and at the same time, the exuberant energy that only a great personality can give.

The gnosis of Paul had had poured into it the dynamic of a personality so committed to the Christian expression of religion that he could say that all life to him was Christ. With full recognition of the different levels upon which the two concepts lie, it appears to this writer inevitably necessary to recognize that in its essential outlines, the gnosis of Paul conforms to the concept as found in the mystery religions of the Hellenistic world.

IV

ITS MEANING IN JOHANNINE THOUGHT

WE have examined the religious world in which the Fourth Gospel came into being to see how the concept "knowledge" lived in that world, in order that we might be in a better position to understand the actual content of, and the motive for the term which takes so central a place in the Gospel. We have seen that although the concept was sparingly used in Judaism, it had its place there, and that in Hellenistic circles it was a central religious concept, with fairly homogeneous connotations in the various systems of religion which we may assume to have been available in the Ephesian environment of the writer of the Fourth Gospel.

It now becomes our task to return to the Fourth Gospel, and to try to state the relationship which the concept in the Gospel bears to its use in the systems which we have been examining.

It may seem at first glance that the results of the study are mainly negative. The Fourth Gospel, at all events, is not a reproduction, in its handling of "knowledge" in religious experience, of any one of the systems which made up its religious environment. In the Old Testament view of religion, which was essentially practical rather than mystical, we find only occasional flashes of thought which lead toward the Fourth Gospel notion of religion as individual communion with God. Where "knowledge of God" is

assumed as an essential factor in religion, it habitually finds itself in close correlation with the idea of the ethical expression of religion. In prophetic expression, it is knowledge of the character of Jahweh which compels an embodiment in human life of the values for which he stands, and this is an essentially different emphasis from that of the Fourth Gospel, where "knowledge of God" is intimate, personal, mystical fellowship. Only in Hosea and Jeremiah appear the foreshadowings of that relationship between the individual and God, in the handling of the "knowledge" concept.

But the author of the Fourth Gospel has accepted the correlation of the "knowledge" concept with ethical expression in living, in his insistence upon love in the beloved community, in the steady alternation of the "love" and "belief" motifs. The Wisdom concept of Hebrew thought finds its relationship to the Fourth Gospel, rather in its later development in Hellenistic Judaism and particularly in Philo as it merges into the doctrine of the Logos, than in its expression in the canonical writings.

We found little in late Palestinian Judaism to which our concept is indebted. Where the Fourth Gospel finds itself at home in the thought of first century, Palestinian Judaism is not in either of its two most characteristic tendencies of thought, legalism or apocalypticism, but rather in those aspects of its thinking which are themselves, without doubt, the result of adaptation to Hellenistic ways of thought: in its universalism, its individualism, and in its increasing emphasis on the spiritual aspects of religious experience.

But these factors in religious thought are the mere framework upon which such a concept as that of the Fourth Gospel "knowledge" can be built. They are

far from carrying us to the heart of the question of the content, or the motive for the concept, which we are seeking to understand.

In Hellenistic Judaism, on the other hand, and especially in Philo, we find much that is congenial with the Fourth Gospel notion of religious experience. For Philo, as for the Fourth Gospel, the heart of religion is the quest of the individual soul for God, and among the factors which assist the soul in the realization of the quest is the Logos, which is at once the rational principle in the universe and the chief mediator between God and man. That the Fourth Gospel accepted the Philonic Logos, at least in its main outlines, as the means for introducing and commending its message to the Hellenistic world, there can be little doubt.

But it can hardly be said to have adopted with it the Philonic idea of the place of "knowledge" in religious experience. Philo made much of "reason" in his handling of the religious life of man, giving it a superior place over the sense-activity of human beings, but when he came actually to the discussion of the highest form of union with God, he discarded reason, and accepted the way of ecstasy, emotional exaltation, in which intellectual factors had been given a distinctly secondary place.

In this direction Philo shares in the general Hellenistic interpretation of religious experience as we found it exemplified in the mystery religions, in Gnosticism, in Hermetism, and partially at least in the *Odes of Solomon*. For Hellenistic religion, gnosis is man's possession, not through the exercise of any rational or reflective processes, but by reason of an illuminating experience which has brought him light from the heavenly realm. "Knowledge" is a divine

gift, which, both in its content and in the process by which it is acquired, is separated from the intellectual aspects of man's life. Ecstasy, rather than reflection, is its accompanying state, and the steps by which man arrives at this ecstasy are confessedly those which tend to bring intellectual processes into abeyance, and emotional states to the fore.

In the higher ranges of this Hellenistic thinking, the permanence of the relationship is affirmed, and the more spiritual aspects of its nature are stressed, as in the vision of Apuleius and in the Hermetic literature, but the processes remain even here, emotional and ecstatic, rather than rational or reflective. The *Odes of Solomon,* which seem in many respects to lie close to the thought of the Fourth Gospel, are too fragmentary an expression upon which to base a generalization concerning their influence as motive or control over the Fourth Gospel view, and the partial glimpse afforded of the mystical experience of the *Odes* gives no such place to "knowledge" as we find given by the Fourth Gospel.

Pauline Christianity, with all its wide departures from the mystery religions, appears in this investigation of its gnosis concept to have allied itself with Hellenistic modes of thinking in its treatment of the concept. His "gospel," as Paul termed it, had come by revelation, and the accompanying state was ecstasy. Paul's preaching of Christianity asked from his converts no process of rational or reflective endeavor preceding the acceptance of the revelation.

His arguments concerning justification, sanctification and glorification rest as a superstructure upon a gospel already received in its entirety by revelation. "Faith," which is the Pauline equivalent for our concept "gnosis," and which is used almost interchange-

ably with it by him is a function of the will and of the emotions rather than of the mind.

For the Fourth Gospel, Dr. Scott affirmed that "knowledge" lay in this same category. And here is the crux of our study; the investigation of the Hellenistic notion of "knowledge" as a factor in religious experience and of the place that that concept holds in the Fourth Gospel has compelled the present writer to disagree with Dr. Scott's interpretation of the case.

Dr. Scott has allowed a unique form of mysticism in the Fourth Gospel, not pantheistic like the Hermetic literature, not completely dualistic like the Mystery cults; more completely integrated with ethical principles than either, and more concrete, in its grounding upon historical fact rather than upon myth or abstraction. With all this, the present writer is in agreement, but is compelled to take a further step—that the Fourth Gospel differentiates itself also from Hellenistic religion in this very concept under consideration, the one in which Dr. Scott has not allowed for difference.

The thesis which this study offers is that whereas Paul has been content to accept the truly Hellenistic notion of "knowledge," the author of the Fourth Gospel writes in reaction from it, with the conscious intent to pour into the term more of both intellectual and ethical content, and that in this respect his Gospel represents a swing away from the Hellenistic religions of redemption rather than a more complete acceptance of their theology.[1]

We have previously noted the Hebrew prophetic correlation of knowledge with ethical idealism, accepted without argument by the author of the Fourth

[1] Dr. Scott's position in his earlier work, *The Fourth Gospel,* lies closer to the view of this paper, pp. 270 ff.

Gospel, which in itself gives a color to the concept not characteristically Hellenistic. This is not to say that ethical values were not stressed in the Hellenistic religions; evidence can be adduced to show that the good and moral life was sometimes urged. But ethical interests were always subordinate in Hellenistic religion to other aims, and never reached a position of supreme importance.

With both Paul and the Fourth Gospel, there is stress on the ethical side of religious experience, but with a difference. For Paul, moral renewal is the result of the new birth. Man is now dead to sin,[2] and moral fruits appear in the actual conduct of life. Virtues are listed as among the fruits of the Spirit.[3] For the Fourth Gospel, on the other hand, the ethical aspects of the religious life are summed up under the category of love, and the love of the brethren appears as the indispensable correlate of the "belief" which constitutes the heart of religious experience.

"A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another."[4]

"If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them."[5]

And after the question to Philip: "Believest thou that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" Jesus turns immediately to the moral aspect of that belief.

"He that believeth on me, the works that I do, he shall do also."[6]

"If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments."[7]

[2] Rom. vi. 1-8: xiv; Gal. v. 24; I Cor. xii. 4 ff.; Col. ii. 11.
[3] Gal. v. 22.
[4] John xiii. 34.
[5] xiii. 17.
[6] xiv. 10.
[7] xiv. 15.

The spirit of the discourse material, from Chapter xii. on, is charged with this reciprocal Love-Belief relationship. It is as if we were being shown two sides of one experience, neither one of which is complete without the other. The integration of the two ideas, closer even than it is in Paul, marks the movement of the author's ideas in a direction away from the thought of Hellenistic religion.

But to come closer to the heart of the "knowledge" concept itself. On its Godward side, "knowledge" in the Fourth Gospel is, as Dr. Scott has said, a revelation—"that higher illumination by which we become aware of unseen realities." [8] Jesus declared himself the Light of the world.

"He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." [9]

In the coming of Jesus, light came into the world.[10]

"I am come a light into the world." [11]

And believing in Jesus is described as "becoming sons of light." [12] But are we right in assuming, as Dr. Scott does, that this "knowledge" on man's side, "has nothing to do with any activity of the reason"? [13] In the opinion of the present writer it is here that the Fourth Gospel takes its departure from the Hellenistic religions and from Paul, in presenting the gnosis of Christian experience as definitely connected with rational and reflective activity in human nature.

In the first place, the author of the Fourth Gospel in his choice of the biographical form for his message,

[8] Scott, *Hellenistic Mysticism in the Fourth Gospel*, p. 350.
[9] viii. 12. [10] iii. 19. [11] xii. 46. [12] xii. 36.
[13] Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

calls for reflective activities which are antecedent in the process of redemption to the "belief" which is the heart of the experience. In an environment where there were current so many systems of religious thought as we have here reviewed, in which the vehicle for expression has been liturgies, hymns, dramatic rites, reports of ecstatic vision, the exuberant exhortations to "faith" of the Pauline letter—John chose as his medium the biographical form, a form previously in use in Christian literary expression, but one which Paul had found quite unnecessary in his adaptation of Christianity for Hellenistic reception.

Paul, with all his appeal to theological interests, displayed an almost complete disregard for the life of Jesus. That Jesus lived and died, that he was buried and rose again are the essential facts for Paul. It is the drama of redemption that Paul wished to portray. As Loisy has put it,

> "Jésus ne prêchait pas une religion nouvelle, mais l'accomplissement de l'espérance d'Israël. Paul prêche une religion qui n'est point le judaisme mais une économie de salut fondée sur la valeur mystique de la mort de Jésus, et dans laquelle on entre en s'unissant par des engagements et des rites sacrés à ce Christ, dans sa mort salutaire et dans sa glorieuse immortalité."[24]

In distinction from Paul, the Fourth Gospel makes its appeal to belief on the grounds of a reverent contemplation of the values represented by the earthly life of Jesus. The one may be grasped in an instant—the fact that a God has died and lives again, in union with whom lies salvation.

The other is a reflective process, whose steps must

[24] Loisy, *Les Mystères païens et le Mystère chrêtien*, p. 206.

be taken deliberately and in order. This is life eternal, that they should know Thee. And how is man to know God? By the divine illumination, yes. But on man's side, there are steps by which the approach must be made to the reception of the gift, and the first among these steps is a reflective evaluation of the historical life of Jesus. By the choice of his vehicle for the expression of his message, the author of the Fourth Gospel has moved in the direction of intellectualizing the mystical experience which constitutes the redemptive process.

It is not simply in the choice of the vehicle, however, that the Gospel makes its appeal to the reflective elements in man's nature as inherently necessary to religious experience. Within the biographical form, the author takes definite steps to insure intellectual appreciation of the validity of his appeal. This is not in any way to minimize that emotional response which the book awakens.

The essential characteristic of the Jesus who appears in the Fourth Gospel is love; his tenderness with his disciples calls out their affection; he calls for love as the eternal bond of union between himself and those who follow him. The enthusiastic devotion of the author has been directed toward calling out a genuinely emotional response from the reader. The book, as Drummond has phrased it,

> "with its tender and unearthly beauty, with its rapt vision of the life in God, and its promise of a Comforter to abide with us forever . . . invites us to rest in peace and lose ourselves in dreams of blessedness and love."[15]

[15] Drummond, *The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 2.

It is not to minimize the warmth of emotional appeal which the Gospel exerts, that one recognizes a corresponding, and a perhaps more self-conscious call on the part of the writer to the exercise of one's rational faculties in the appreciation of the life of Jesus, a call which differentiates it from any of the other formulations of religion which we have examined in this study.

We have already seen that in the characteristic vocabulary which the author employs, the presuppositions are in favor of such an appeal to the rational appreciation of the mission of Jesus. The characteristic citation of the witnesses upon whose evidence belief in Jesus may be substantiated, constitute a part of this appeal. Belief in Jesus comes into being not merely as a result of the receptive attitude on man's part, not merely as a result of the enthusiastic acceptance of a set of facts which constitute a drama of redemption—a life, death, and resurrection—but is built upon testimony which is susceptible of proof upon rational grounds.

Knowledge of God is the goal. This *is* life eternal. But mystical union with Christ is the means through which it is attained, and mystical union with Christ is contingent upon belief that he was what he claimed to be. Belief in him rested upon data, capable of intellectual apprehension, and susceptible of proof in the realm of rational experience. The Gospel opens with the testimony of John the Baptist,[16] and the Old Testament writings are repeatedly cited,[17] as are the words,[18] and the works[19] of Jesus, as evidence that he was actually the Son of God. The miracles are

[16] i. 6-8, 19; x. 41; v. 33.
[17] v. 46-7; xii. 36 ff; xvii. 12.
[18] iv. 41.
[19] xv. 24.

treated as "signs," attestations of his glory,[20] and belief is called out by them:

"The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me."[21]

"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not, but if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."[22]

Jesus is represented as saying that his own witness is greater than that of John the Baptist:

"But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."[23]

And at the last, Jesus's appeal to Philip is on the basis of his work:

"Believe me for the very works' sake."[24]

In the future, Jesus maintains, the disciples themselves and the Spirit of Truth will corroborate this testimony which is now being brought by his own words and works.[25] And finally the appeal is made to the Father himself as "witness" that Jesus actually was the Son:

"The Father that sent me hath borne witness of me."[26]

"He that sent me is true."[27]

The whole fabric of religious experience is represented as commending itself for rational acceptance by man.

[20] ii. 11.
[21] x. 25.
[22] x. 38.
[23] v. 36.
[24] xiv. 11.
[25] xv. 26-27.
[26] v. 37.
[27] vii. 28.

But belief in Jesus is called out not merely by testimony in this external realm, but by his own inner qualities which put him in a category other than that of the ordinary human being. In definite departure from the Synoptic record, the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is a divine figure with more than human knowledge of people and events. He is fully cognizant of the meaning of situations. He completely understands the motives which actuate the persons with whom he comes in contact. He knew Nathaniel while he was yet under the fig tree; he knew the early life of the Samaritan woman; he knew the character of Judas and that he would betray him; and he was fully in command of the circumstances of his own life.

"I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again."[28]

The witness that is external is paralleled by a witness within—the witness of the complete mastery and self-determination of Jesus, as he moves through the story, a majestic, superhuman figure, never the victim of circumstance, never the prey of other men's design, himself always completely the master of events. He proclaims himself the Son, and the rôle which is given to him in the drama by its author supports that assertion at every point.

By a witness which both lies in the realm of external data and has subtly woven itself into the very fabric of the delineation of Jesus's character, the Fourth Gospel has commended its notion of mystical religious experience to its readers. And in another direction as well, the Gospel has differentiated the gnosis which is

[28] x. 18.

central in that religious experience from the gnosis of the Hellenistic religions of redemption.

The Gospel represents the "knowledge of God" which is the end of mystical religion not as a complete possession, the result of one great illuminating process, but as a revelation progressively received. This is the office of the Spirit in the Johannine theology. Jesus is the full and complete revelation of God:

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."[29]

But still there is need of the agency of the Spirit, an agency which is twofold—to teach, and to bring back to the remembrance of the disciples the things which Jesus has taught.[30] Jesus has many things to say to them, which now "they cannot bear," and hence,

"When the Spirit of Truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth."[31]

We have seen how the Hellenistic treatment of the gnosis concept tends toward a view of its acceptance as ecstatic, cataclysmic, and taking place once for all in a great illuminating process known as a "mystery." Paul patterned his view of the gnosis which was Christian in its content, after this Hellenistic type, allowing, indeed, as they often did, for stages in which the "knowledge" was to come, gradations which allowed a simpler knowledge for the novice and a higher type for the seasoned initiate. The mystery religions had provided the ἐποπτεία, which were the consummation of knowledge and made the adherent one with the deity.

But each of these experiences was epochal in nature,

[29] xiv. 9. [30] xiv. 26. Cf. Westcott's note upon the passage. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John,* Vol. II, p. 183.
[31] xiv. 9.

as it appeared in the Hellenistic view, a little "conversion" or vision, a little cataclysmic experience with its own rites and its own results. In its most spiritual form, as we have seen in the final vision of Apuleius, and in the Hermetic literature, and emphatically in Paul, a permanent quality appeared in its results. One lived always with the recollection of the vision upon one, in a "different way of life" for having had the vision.

But even here, there is a distinction from the view of the Fourth Gospel, where the experience itself is progressive. In the Fourth Gospel it is represented as a gradual growth in fellowship with Jesus.

"Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?" [32]

And a gradually and steadily enlarging appreciation of the truth is to be afforded by the Spirit.

The emphasis, also, on the relationship with Jesus, as one that is abiding, leads in the direction of a progressive revelation. There is a bread that perisheth, but the disciples are urged to labor for the bread that "abideth unto eternal life." [33] The condition of knowing the truth is "abiding in Jesus's word." [34]

Under the figure of the branch abiding in the vine is the relationship most clearly expressed. As the branch grows while it is part of the vine, so their fellowship is to mean enlargement of the truth. Jesus spoke of himself as the Light of the world, but he did not represent that light as coming to the believer in one sudden flash, but as being received as a steady illumination in which he is to walk.

[32] xiv. 9.
[33] vi. 27.
[34] viii. 31.

"He that followeth after me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."[35]

Jesus, when washing the disciples' feet, tells them that although they do not now know what he does, they shall understand hereafter.[36]

Perhaps we may also see a hint of the progressive nature of the revelation in the author's preference for the verb γινώσκω, "to come to know," for the designation of his gnosis concept over the simple verb οἶδα, to know in full. A rough gauge of this preference appears in the fact that twice as many instances of the former occur as of the latter. Γινώσκω intensifies the progressive quality of the action. And significantly the progressive present tense of the verb is used in the definition of eternal life:

"This is life eternal that they should come to know [or grow in the knowledge of, (ἵνα γινώσκωσιν)] Thee."

Eternal life is not knowledge as a possession but as a quality of living which is evolutionary, progressively achieving in the field of knowledge.[37] We cannot but recognize here a genuine difference between this conception and that of Paul. For Paul, the transition was sudden, precipitous; and life was at once completely different. There was a new increment to life which made a man dead to his old self and a "new man in Christ Jesus." In the light of his own experience he saw the putting off of the old and the putting on of the new as effected abruptly and finally, and in this he was at one with the prevailing view of the theology of the Hellenistic world.

[35] viii. 12. [36] xiii. 7.

[37] Cf. Inge, *Christian Mysticism,* Scribner's, New York, 1899, p. 52.

For the Johannine conception, on the other hand, the transition, though no less mysterious, no less complete, no less a work of the Spirit, was in its nature less cataclysmic, and its processes were more gradual and more reflective. As we contemplate this which seems a deliberate choice of language to indicate the progressive character of the knowledge of God, we are reminded once more of the omissions already noted in the Johannine vocabulary. Is it not significant that the author avoids such characteristic "mystery" words as γνῶσις, μυστήριον, τελετή, in his designations of the mystical experience of knowing God? Grill, who goes so far in his effort to establish the genuine "mystery" character of the Fourth Gospel as to find the Dionysus motif dominating the Gospel, explains the avoidance of the term μυστήριον on the grounds of its eschatological use in the Synoptics and in Paul.[38]

But it is not the omission of one word alone for which we must account, and the omissions become the more significant when we reflect upon the place which the "knowledge" concept plays in the Gospel. It could have demanded no less than studied care to secure the avoidance of the noun γνῶσις, and in every connection he has secured it. Can that avoidance be interpreted in any other fashion so reasonably as that it was the writer's design to prevent a confusion of his notion of "knowledge" with that one which was generally prevailing in the circles which the work would reach?

The view, then, which this study would offer is that the Fourth Gospel, truly a product of the religious syncretism of the Hellenistic world in the early second century, presents a concept of "knowledge" which is a reaction from the generally accepted notion in the

[38] Grill, *Die Entstehung des Vierten Evangeliums,* II, Ch. III.

theology of the Hellenistic world, and that the author's correction is in the direction of intellectualizing the nature of mystical religious experience. The author recognized a need for a new expression of Christianity in the shifting thought of the world in which he lived.

His Gospel was to adapt the Christian message for that world, and it must speak in the language of religious experience current in that world. Partaking as the Gospel does, of the actual life of that world, it presented Christianity as a religion of individual redemption. It made use of the dualism of Hellenistic thought in its categories of Light and Darkness. It accepted the current notions of a preëxistent Logos to commend its story of the incarnation. It presented the believer's acceptance of Christianity in the familiar terms of a new-birth experience, and it gave a truly sacramental significance to the rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper. In these and in other ways, the author of the Gospel made use of the current coin of religious experience in the Hellenistic world in commending Christianity to his readers.

But as the author has turned from Hellenistic ways of thinking in his intense spiritualizing of the nature of religious experience, as he gave a wholly new character to his Gospel by the centering of its interest about the eternal values of mystical fellowship with God through Jesus, so in his handling of the "knowledge" concept, which he has made fundamental in his analysis of religion, he has infused into his concept notions which differentiate it sharply from the current Hellenistic view.

"Knowledge" on its Godward side was to him "illumination," a divine gift of light, mediated through Jesus, who came "a light into the world." But on

man's side, steps must be taken to appropriate the gift, steps which involved not merely the emotional nature of man, but the ethical and the intellectual as well. Ethically speaking, belief was correlative with love, and the union of these two concepts was so close as to make them inseparable from each other. Intellectually speaking, "knowledge" was contingent upon the reflective evaluation of the life of Jesus, a process which rested upon testimony susceptible of proof in the intellectual realm.

The testimony of the Baptist, of the Old Testament, of the words and the works of Jesus, of the Spirit of Truth, and finally of God himself, give support to an appreciation of Jesus as Son of God. In the larger field, this evaluation of Jesus is commended by his presentation, not in the guise of human friend and teacher, but as confessedly divine, omniscient, self-determining, and avowedly the unique revelation of God.

The gnosis of the Fourth Gospel, in distinction from that of the Hellenistic religions of redemption, was represented as a gradual process of enlightenment, progressive in character, rather than suddenly and ecstatically received. Progressive fellowship with God, a constant but evolutionary process in the human soul, not an ecstatic act at a given moment in time, is the gnosis of the Fourth Gospel.

Here, in this differentiation of the gnosis concept from that which was current in the author's environment, appears a hint of the motive back of the writing. The Pauline presentation of Christianity, congenial as it was in most respects to the Johannine writer, must have seemed to him to fail at this point. The systems of redemption in the Hellenistic religions must have seemed pitifully inadequate to one whose apprehension

of spiritual reality was so deep, so thorough-going and so pervasive of all life.

It is failure in understanding of the truly subjective and poetic nature of the book, to ask for too self-conscious a polemic in his handling of a single concept —and here is the failure of those who see as basal in the writing controversial purposes, militating against Judaism, against Gnosticism, or against the Baptist sects; and the present writer wishes to guard against that error.

However such polemics may have figured as subsidiary motives for expression, it is failure of the gravest sort not to recognize in this sublimest of Christian documents a genuinely subjective motive for its production, the urge of intense personal religious experience. Here was a life so charged with its own mystical relationship to God that expression was nothing external, but was organic in the experience itself. The passionate commitment of life to the Christian formulation of religion must forge its way through to expression, and must communicate itself to others by reason of its own completeness and dynamic power.

With full recognition of the un-selfconscious, subjective nature of the Gospel, one still finds the Gospel molded by and directed toward the tendencies of thought in its own age, often with the aim of correcting views which were at variance with those of the writer. Such corrective aims we are accustomed to see in the author's treatment of the Judaizing interests of the early church, of the sects which magnified the claims of John the Baptist over those of Jesus, and of the incipient dangers of Gnosticism.

The present writer has been convinced by this study that such a contributing motive was the urge to fill the term "gnosis" with a fuller content than it held in

the contemporary religious world. To do this, he dared not risk confusion by the employment of the term itself. Better to accept a circumlocution than allow the ordinarily accepted meaning to blur the concept as it figured in his own thought, a concept in which reflective thinking, and ethical expression, played as full a part as did emotional warmth and religious fervor.

Is it not conceivable that this very shift toward the intellectualizing of mystical experience which the Fourth Gospel gave to its message was also a spur to the intellectualizing of the Christian movement as a whole? It was only a few decades later that creed-building had begun, and that the "apology" had become the popular vehicle for Christian expression.

In his earlier work, Dr. Scott has recognized two sources for the Johannine concept of "knowledge," the Platonic theory of the soul's escape from bondage by the contemplation of truth, and the Hebrew notion of sympathy and understanding which implies appreciation of the moral nature of God.

> "Writing as he did for Greek readers from the point of view of Greek philosophical theory, he cannot have meant to ignore the fixed Hellenic conception of 'knowing' as primarily an act of the logical reason. When he insists on the importance of true 'knowledge,' he is speaking presumably in the language of his own time and culture, even though a reminiscence of Hebrew usage still lingers about the term."[39]

This study has led the present writer to the belief that a position intermediate between this statement of Dr. Scott's and the one which served as the point of departure for the investigation is the accurate one. The

[39] Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 270 ff.

statement just quoted needs modification; the culture of the author's own time would hardly have given the classical content to the term gnosis. Morgan has rightly called our attention to the fact that philosophical speculation in the classical sense was no longer popular in the first century A.D.[40] Hellenistic religious categories of "illumination" had replaced those of Hellenic logical reasoning in the realm of abstraction.

But the correction of the statement offered in Dr. Scott's later article seems to the present writer to have gone too far. The gnosis of Hellenistic religious experience was in content esoteric, presenting either a set of rites or a little drama of redemption, and was in process ecstatic and emotional. Even the philosophy of the day conceived it so.

And here appears the discriminating, creative gift of the author of the Fourth Gospel, that accepting from Hellenistic religion its redemption motif, he thrust into it a new concept of "knowledge" which was partly a fusion of Hellenic philosophical notions and Old Testament ethical evaluations, but also more. It is not merely reflection upon abstract truth for which he asks. It is not merely appreciation of the moral nature of God. It is not merely a fusion of the two. Nor, on the other hand, has he been content to ally himself with the current notions of the Hellenistic world.

Rather, he has held with the best from all, and has brought to the Hellenistic notion of "knowledge" that is illumination and comes to man by the avenue of ecstasy or vision, a correction which, on the content side, is a progressive, personal fellowship with Jesus, the Son of God, and on its process side, recognizes the need of man's reflective powers, and challenges not

[40] Morgan, *The Religion and Theology of Paul*, p. 136.

only his emotional, but his intellectual nature as well. The power to assimilate and use all that is best in the thought of his age, but to break from it and creatively to build new values from it, is revealed in the Fourth Gospel's assertion:

"This is life eternal, that they should grow in the knowledge of Thee, the only true God and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."

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